

# UMMC to negotiate new terms with insurance provider Blue Cross Blue Shield

The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) is in negotiations with Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi (BCBSMS) for an updated contract with the insurance provider, with the hope for a new agreement over the next two months. UMMC notified BCBSMS management Monday, April 30, that it will terminate the current agreement on June 30, 2018.

“During the coming weeks, as we continue to negotiate with BCBSMS, absolutely nothing will change for our patients,” said Dr. Charles O’Mara, UMMC associate vice chancellor for clinical affairs. “We encourage Blue Cross members to continue to visit their UMMC care providers just as they always have. Our goal is to maintain business as usual, so our patients do not experience any disruption in their care.”

Without a new agreement in place by June 30, UMMC will become out-of-network for BCBSMS customers, and those patients may face higher out-of-pocket costs.

Normally, exceptions are made for patients who need emergency medical care or established patients who need continuation of care for an ongoing illness.Failure to reach an agreement also would not impact members of the State and School Employees’ Health Insurance Plan and their covered dependents, because that plan is administered by but not offered by BCBSMS.

“We are committed to negotiating with Blue Cross in good faith,” O’Mara said. “However, it’s important to understand that our current agreement with Blue Cross was developed 28 years ago, when UMMC and the health care industry were vastly

different. Most troubling, the base contract from 1990 allows Blue Cross to make any changes it wants to the terms of the agreement – including what it pays us for services we deliver to patients – without consulting UMMC.”

As the state’s only academic medical center, UMMC offers the only Level I trauma center and children’s hospital in the state, the only organ transplant service, and one of the most extensive telehealth networks in the nation.

“Equitable contracts with our payor partners – like BCBSMS – allow us to keep the physicians, technology, facilities, staff and resources needed to provide the very best care possible to the people of Mississippi,” said Kevin Cook, CEO of the UMMC health system.

Unfortunately, Cook said, BCBSMS’ ability to manipulate reimbursement even

after an agreement is signed means that any rate proposal UMMC might agree to can’t be counted on unless the base contract is revised.

“We are committed to a strong, collaborative and fair partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield that supports our mission to improve the lives of Mississippians through exceptional patient care, training the next generation of health care providers, and engaging in innovative research,” Cook said. “Through these continuing negotiations, we are optimistic we can reach a new agreement between our organizations.”

Contrary to criticisms leveled by BCBSMS about UMMC’s costs and quality outcomes, data suggests that UMMC hospitals’ cost structure is among the lowest in the country, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Benchmarked against peer academic medical centers, the hospitals’ adjusted expense per patient day is well below the 25th percentile in recent



**May 31** - Steve and Stephanie Diffey, Virgil and Rossie King

**June 1** - Guy and Liz Taylor, Doyle and Louise Gilmore, Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Riley, James Edward and Peggy Killebrew, Randy and Linsey Stewart

**June 2** - Pablo and Randi Hernandez ST, Luke and Lauren Eaton, Owen and Natalie McLellan

**June 4** - Mike and Patty Hood, William and Bettie Holmes, Murray and Pam Burrell, Larry and Mary Killebrew

**June 5** - John and Pattie Lowe, Landon and Rebecca Hood, Tracy and Karen Eldridge, Hank and Erica Wentworth

**June 6** - Josh and Kaley Carpenter

national rankings.

“We’re one of the best bargains in the country,” said Cook.

Similarly, UMMC’s quality data have improved markedly over the last two years and continue on an upward trajectory in the most current ratings. Quality scores can lag by almost two years, so UMMC publishes its current quality data online.

## \*Bridges

(Continued from page 1.) is the oldest one listed, having been built in 1927. The Howard Road bridge has the longest detour/reroute distance at 14 miles for travelers.

According to the AP, “Bryant said he will call lawmakers into special session if they can agree on a funding plan.

## Durant Summer Feeding Program

Durant Public School District, 65 West Madison Street, Durant, MS 39063 will hold its Summer Feeding Program beginning June 4, 2018 and ending June 29, 2018. Breakfast will be served from 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 and lunch will be served from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

All meals are free to all children age 18 years and younger. There is no fee/registration in accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability. USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

For more information, you may contact Clara Ware, Food Service Supervisor, or Glenn Carlisle, Superintendent of Schools, at (662) 653-3910.

2017 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report  
Ebenezer Rural Water Association  
PWS ID#: 0260007  
May 2018

We're pleased to present to you this year's Annual Quality Water Report. This report is designed to inform you about the quality water and services we deliver to you every day. Our constant goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water. Our water source is from wells drawing from the Meridian Upper Wilcox Aquifer.

The source water assessment has been completed for our public water system to determine the overall susceptibility of its drinking water supply to identify potential sources of contamination. A report containing detailed information on how the susceptibility determinations were made has been furnished to our public water system and is available for viewing upon request. The wells for the Ebenezer Rural Water Association have received a moderate susceptibility ranking to contamination.

If you have any questions about this report or concerning your water utility, please contact Thomas E. Haffey, Jr. at 662-834-3396. We want our valued customers to be informed about their water utility. If you want to learn more, please attend the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 9/11/18, at 7:00 PM at the Ebenezer Fire Department.

We routinely monitor for contaminants in your drinking water according to Federal and State laws. This table below lists all of the drinking water contaminants that were detected during the period of January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017. In cases where monitoring wasn't required in 2017, the table reflects the most recent results. As water travels over the surface of land or underground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive materials and can pick up substances or contaminants from the presence of animals or from human activity; microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, that may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife; inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm-water runoff, industrial, or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming; pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban storm-water runoff, and residential uses; organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations and septic systems; radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities. In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. All drinking water, including bottled drinking water, may be reasonably expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. It's important to remember that the presence of these contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

In this table you will find many terms and abbreviations you might not be familiar with. To help you better understand these terms we've provided the following definitions:

**Action Level** - the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)** - The "Maximum Allowed" (MCL) is the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG)** - The "Goal"(MCLG) is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL)** - The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary to control microbial contaminants.

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)** - The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk of health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l)** - one part per million corresponds to one minute in two years or a single penny in \$10,000.

**Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter** - one part per billion corresponds to one minute in 2,000 years, or a single penny in \$10,000,000.

TEST RESULTS								
Contaminant	Violation Y/N	Date Collected	Level Detected	Range of Detects or # of Samples Exceeding MCL/AQL/MRDL	Unit Measurement	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
<b>Inorganic Contaminants</b>								
10. Barium	N	2015*	0.025	0.022 - .0025	ppm	2	2	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
13. Chromium	N	2015*	1.6	1.1 – 1.6	ppb	100	100	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; erosion of natural deposits
14. Copper	N	2015/17	2	0	ppm	1.3	AL=1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives
16. Fluoride	N	2015*	.159	.148 - .159	ppm	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
17. Lead	N	2015/17	1	0	ppb	0	AL=15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits
<b>Disinfection By-Products</b>								
81. HAA5	N	2017	10	No Range	ppb	0	60	By-Product of drinking water disinfection.
82. THM [Total trihalomethanes]	N	2017	15.3	No Range	ppb	0	80	By-product of drinking water chlorination.
Chlorine	N	2017	1.1	.6 – 1.2	mg/l	0	MDRL = 4	Water additive used to control microbes

\* Most recent sample. No sample required for 2017.

As you can see by the table, our system had no violations. We're proud that your drinking water meets or exceeds all Federal and State requirements. We have learned through our monitoring and testing that some contaminants have been detected however the EPA has determined that your water IS SAFE at these levels.

We are required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a monthly basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not our drinking water meets health standards. In an effort to ensure systems complete all monitoring requirements, MSDH now notifies systems of any missing samples prior to the end of the compliance period.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Our water system is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/leadwaterlead>. The Mississippi State Department of Health Public Health Laboratory offers lead testing. Please contact 601.576.7582 if you wish to have your water tested.

All sources of drinking water are subject to potential contamination by substances that are naturally occurring or man made. These substances can be microbes, inorganic or organic chemicals and radioactive substances. All drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline 1-800-426-4791.

The Ebenezer Rural Water Association works around the clock to provide top quality water to every tap. We ask that all our customers help us protect our water sources, which are the heart of our community, our way of life and our children's future.

Notice: This report will not be mailed to each customer.

## 23rd May

### ACROSS

- 1 Rand-McNally offerings  
5 Gomez's endearment for Morticia  
9 Plagiarize, informally  
13 Swanky resorts  
17 Colonizer of Greenland  
18 Draft animals  
19 Patty Duke's real first name  
20 Sexologist Shere  
21 Baltic capital  
22 Rail car that hauls trailers  
24 Prince of opera  
25 Bald babies  
27 Chemistry classrooms, for short  
28 Elgar's "Variations"  
30 Words of agreement, out West  
31 Extreme adverb  
32 Packing box  
33 "Balanced" zodiac sign  
35 Mountain pool  
36 Standards  
39 Golden yrs. funds  
40 Tony's gang  
41 Web victims  
42 lsm follower  
43 Time period  
44 Cameraman's maneuvers  
45 Scottish hillsides  
46 Disappear, as snow  
47 "X" in algebra  
49 Inclination  
50 Electrical safeguards  
51 Volkswagen model  
52 Pulls back  
53 Convened  
54 Sedan's squeegee  
57 Light submachine guns  
58 Takes  
62 Bone-dry  
63 Stock portion  
64 Word shunned by Columbus  
65 Choler  
66 Linger  
67 "...and \_\_\_ a big

### DOWN

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68 Morose  
69 Marsh fever  
70 Choo Choo Charlie, for one  
72 Metric weight unit  
73 Trod the boards  
74 In a snit  
75 Nerdy fellow  
76 Tract  
77 Pitch in  
79 Swiss river  
80 Jingles  
83 Sounds from the bleachers  
84 Having color  
87 Stewpot  
88 First name in courtroom fiction  
89 S. Grant's counterpart  
90 Sea eagle  
91 Elise of "The Hughleys"  
92 States  
93 Round at the Duke's Head  
94 "Shucks!"  
95 Best or O'Brien

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