

November 10, 2008

Bill Milnes Jr., President
BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

1 page via fax

Dear Mr. Milnes:

On behalf of PETA and our more than 2 million members and supporters—including thousands in Vermont—I am writing to urge you to offer lower health insurance premiums to vegetarians and to raise the rates of your meat-eating customers. Given the latest news about the effects of *E. coli* on meat-eaters—and the mountain of evidence linking meat consumption to some of our nation's deadliest diseases—this change will benefit BlueCross BlueShield's bottom line while also helping to ensure that your policyholders don't flat line.

I'm sure you saw the news reports last month about the alarming outbreak of *E. coli* in Vermont stemming from tainted meat. As you might know, *E. coli* grows in the intestines of many farmed animals. Slaughterhouses are filthy places, and when animals are eviscerated, feces often spray in every direction. As a result, *E. coli* bacteria frequently end up on meat that will be sold for human consumption. As if this weren't enough reason to order a veggie burger, a recent study published in the journal *Nature* found that not only are meat and dairy products the most commonly contaminated foods, a substance found in these foods can also raise the risk of *E. coli* infection.

Of course, *E. coli* poisoning is just one of many serious health problems that plague meat-eaters. The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the Dieticians of Canada conducted perhaps the largest review ever of all studies on vegetarian diets. They concluded that vegetarian diets "provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases" and that vegetarians are less prone to heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes, and obesity than meat-eaters are. Vegetarians get all the protein, vitamins, and fiber that they need without the artery-clogging cholesterol and saturated fat found in animal flesh.

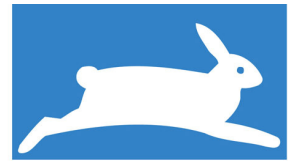
By giving your policyholders a financial incentive to go vegetarian—and penalizing those whose meat-based diets fuel our nation's worst health problems—BlueCross BlueShield could save millions of dollars in the long run as your members begin to require fewer cholesterol-lowering medications, chemotherapy treatments, and diabetes drugs.

Please contact me to let me know of your decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tracy Reiman
Executive Vice President



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

501 FRONT ST.
NORFOLK, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
757-622-0457 (FAX)

PETA.org
Info@peta.org

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TO PROTECTING
THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS