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Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Department of Medicaid Services
275 East Main Street, 6W-C
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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Marissa Ghavami and I am the Founder and CEO of the nonprofit organization Healing TREE (Trauma Resources, Education & Empowerment). Healing TREE is providing this letter of support for Humana as they pursue their bid for the Medicaid and SKY Managed Care Organization (MCO) contracts.

Healing TREE is dedicated to transforming how society responds to abuse and interpersonal trauma. Leading studies, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, show that trauma is a public health crisis and the root cause behind much mental and physical illness, addiction, crime, domestic violence, homelessness and suicide. We know that people with six or more ACEs die nearly 20 years earlier on average than those without ACEs. Thousands of organizations exist today, most of which deal only with single issues, labeling clusters of symptoms and simply managing them. Healing TREE connects those who have suffered trauma with resources necessary for healing rather than coping, provides education to professionals across fields and the public at large that promotes awareness, effective intervention and cutting edge treatment and offers empowerment through producing arts projects that encourage a healing movement.

Healing TREE is looking forward to working with Humana, which understands what it means to offer "Trauma Informed Care," and does not treat it as simply a buzzword, which is becoming popular, to train providers on the evidence-based practices that are included in the State's FFPSA implementation plan. Healing TREE promotes effective and evidence-based treatments that engage the survival part of the brain impacted from ACEs and other traumas and rewires it, addressing what is often the root cause behind so many of our society's toughest issues – trauma.

In 2018 we provided 52 hours of training (Healing TREE sponsored at 80%) in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR; a well-supported treatment modality recommended by The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare) to 25 therapists working in social service agencies serving foster children across Kentuckiana. This totaled 1,300 hours of training, reaching over 1,250 children, 95% of whom are below the poverty level. The results were honestly unbelievable with children who had been receiving traditional treatments for 7 years going from never having self-harmed less than every 6 weeks with constant hospital visits to not self-harming for the past 9 months and not even qualifying for the level of care they had been receiving because their problematic behaviors stopped, for example. To this end, EMDR is effective among children who are in the foster care system

and/or are juvenile justice involved and should be considered for inclusion in the State's FFPSA Implementation Plan.

Humana understands the role they can play in ensuring access to a comprehensive network of trauma informed providers and are aware of the challenges that foster care and juvenile justice involved youth in Kentucky are often pre-disposed with. They understand that offering treatments such as these is the key to moving from putting a band-aid on these vulnerable children's symptoms to providing them with the lasting healing that they deserve, enabling them to live healthy lives and be productive members of our society. We are excited and honored to partner with them and to support their efforts as we know partnerships like these are the key to change.

We will partner with Humana at their annual conference for the SKY program, regional meetings, and other avenues to offer trainings on evidence-based trauma focused practices. We will provide trauma-focused trainings from expert clinicians such as our Advisory Board member and internationally recognized author and EMDR trainer Dr. Jamie Marich, for example. We will also provide lived-experience trainings from people like myself, Healing TREE Founder and CEO as someone who made a complete recovery from Complex-PTSD and Psychogenic Non-Epileptic Seizures. Humana will make these trainings a component of their Education Program and TIC Provider Recognition Program. By training additional professionals via Humana, we are collaborating to increase children's access to trained professionals and increasing capacity for the Commonwealth to care for children in the SKY program.

Humana is the first (and only) MCO who reached out to us and therefore the only one whom I believe currently truly understands the needs of the children in the foster care program and how to create a system of care that is trained to support the Commonwealth's roll-out of the SKY program. From all of us at Healing TREE, again, we are honored and excited about this opportunity and hope you will recognize Humana's integrative approach as the most effective way to get the results that you are seeking and these children deserve. I am available at mghavami@healingtreenonprofit.org or (502) 743-2733 for any questions. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Marissa Ghavami
Founder & CEO, Healing TREE

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