

*State of Illinois  
Business Enterprise Program  
CY 2021 Report*





## INTRODUCTION

Meridian and its parent company, Centene Corporation, believe the best solutions are inclusive of many different perspectives, backgrounds and abilities and know that our work is elevated by the dozens of diverse businesses with whom we are grateful to partner. Each team member's experience and point of view adds value and helps us continue to improve. But there is more work to be done.

Centene has been awarded:

\*The **2020 Diversity Inc list of Top 50 Companies** for diversity, equity and inclusion based on an assessment of key areas of diversity and management, including talent pipeline, talent development, leadership accountability and supplier diversity.

\*As one of the **Best Places to Work by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation** after earning a perfect score of 100 percent on their **Corporate Equality Index (CEI)**. The CEI is a national benchmarking tool on corporate policies and practices pertinent to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) employees.

\*Named a **2020 Leading Disability Employer by the National Organization on Disability** and recognized by the **Disability Equality Index**, sponsored by the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) and the American Association of People with Disabilities. Centene was recognized with a 100 percent score as one of the *Best Places to Work for People with Disabilities*.

\*Included in **Bloomberg's Gender-Equality Index (GEI)**, which lists companies recognized as global leaders in advancing women in the workplace.

\*Honored with a No. 3 ranking on the **Diversity Inc's Top Companies for Talent Acquisition – Women of Color list**.

\*Awarded the **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriotic Employee Award** for fostering a corporate culture that values military members and their families.

We mention these accolades to only show our company's dedication and day-to-day practices that it promotes to each plan. Our teams must reflect the communities we serve both among our staff and our vendors. We are proud of the talented, collaborative workforce we have built – more than half of our employees are people of color and more than 80 percent are women.

We annually invest tens of millions of dollars with minority and women-owned businesses. In Illinois, Meridian Health Plan has partnered with and has active engagements with 126 business which are Business Enterprise Programs (BEP) certified. Our spending with these



businesses has increased every year the past three years. From calendar year 2020 to calendar year 2021, Meridian's BEP spend has doubled, and we are on track to exceed our BEP spend goal in fiscal year 2021.

Our commitment to equity and diversity does not stop there. We continue to pave a path for new, innovative partnerships with minority and women-owned businesses that will support Meridian's mission to serve our members in Illinois. We look forward to working with state officials and elected leaders to help us create more opportunities for businesses owned by minority-, women-, and individuals with disabilities (MWPDP) businesses.

## OVERVIEW

- Meridian's commitment is woven into our DNA and is reflected in one of the most diverse workforces in the industry (83% women and 53% people of color).
- Over the past 12 months, Meridian has made great progress by magnifying the importance of supplier diversity and inclusion. We have 100% buy-in from the top down and have integrated BEP into every aspect of our business.
- Established a Health Equity Committee that will review, recommend, and consult on state-wide issues of health disparities, cultural competency, and social determinants of health (as Centene has already implemented in other states).
- Using Centene's innovative Health Equity Improvement Model to identify HEDIS and utilization outcome disparities by using enrollee-reported race, ethnicity, and language data, as well as using additional data, such as zip codes, to determine if rural or urban areas contribute to disparities.
- Focus on fostering and supporting equity, implementing sustainable enhancements and making lasting impact that goes beyond the narrow scope outlined in the law.

## CY 2020 Initiatives

- Contracted more than 50 new BEP vendors during CY2020 with many new diverse vendor partnerships planned for implementation in 2021.
- Championed a supportive employment program through a BEP supplier that provides supported employment initiatives including skills training and job placement for Meridian beneficiaries in the state of IL impacted by job loss during the pandemic.
- Partnering with a new BEP care management entity, Complete Care Management Partners (formerly Next Level Health), to provide continuous care management services to members transitioning to Meridian.

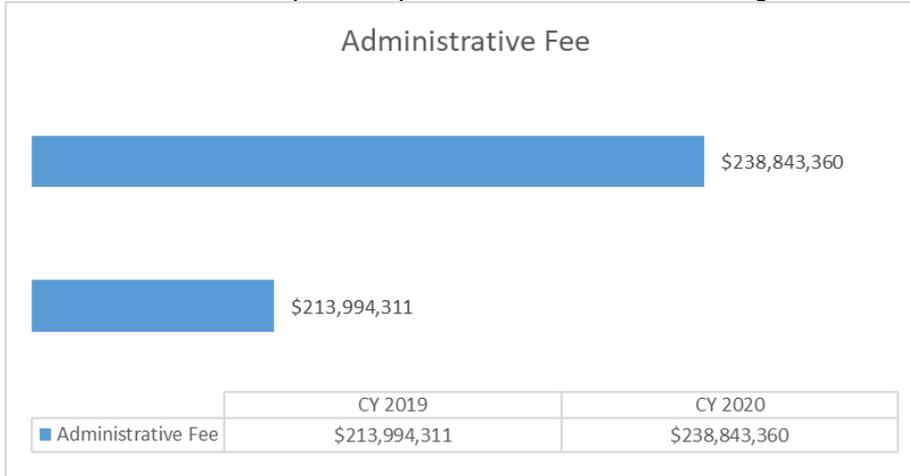


- Introduction and implementation of a prescription medication delivery program 100% sourced from a BEP certified pharmacy in the state of Illinois. This initiative is assisting individuals with medication adherence and access to pharmacy care state wide.
- 2020 Marketing RFP which awarded all of Meridian's local marketing and communications projects to 3 BEP certified firms.
- Engaging with a BEP certified consultant to implement industry wide best practices on supplier diversity.
- Meridian collaborates with the Chicago Minority Supplier Diversity Council (CMSDC) and the Illinois chapter of the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) as active corporate partners.
- Exponentially increased BEP participation through our transportation broker by establishing processes that prioritize and assist BEP certified Transportation providers.
- Conducted an office space build out using BEP subcontractors in Meridian's Burr Ridge and Springfield locations.
- Increased productivity with a BEP entity to help locate and coordinate members that are deemed difficult to reach throughout the state.
- Establishment of the Meridian Supplier Diversity assistance program which conducts outreach to third parties to provide education, guidance, and resources to support vendors through the BEP certification process.
- Meridian's Pay-for-Quality reinvestment project allocated approximately \$5,000,000 to BEP certified entities for initiatives targeted to support communities hardest hit by the COVID 19 Pandemic in Illinois.
  - Meal Delivery to communities located in food deserts
  - Partnership with Behavioral health and Substance abuse entities to provide Personal Protective Equipment to providers and communities
  - E-consult program for Diabetes Health Equity
  - Community-based outreach program built to address food insecurity and nutritional stability in Latinx and African American communities

**RESPONSES**

In accordance with 305 ILCS 5/5-30.11, which require Medicaid managed care health plans to annually report Business Enterprise Program (BEP) diversity spend to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), Meridian Health is providing the following data for consideration:

1. The administrative expenses paid to the Medicaid managed care health plan:



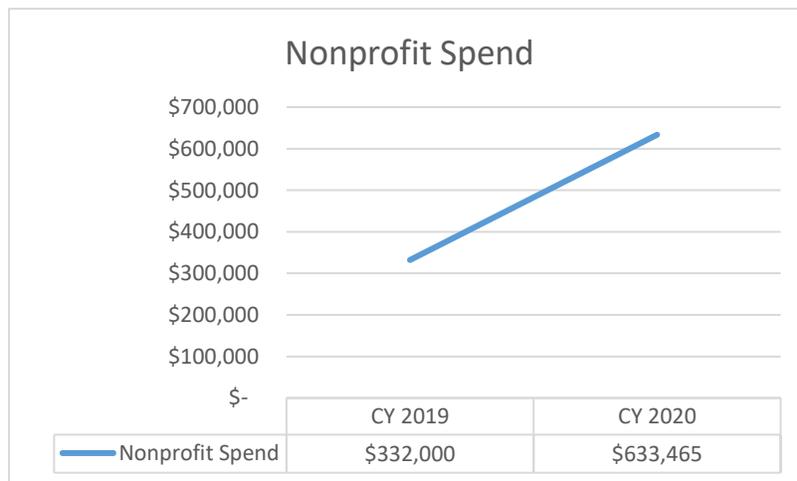
2. The amount of money the Medicaid managed care health plan has spent with Business Enterprise Program certified businesses:

	<b>CY 2019</b>	<b>CY 2020</b>
<b>BEP Certified Spend</b>	\$ 15,592,312.00	\$ 32,520,000.00

- The amount of money the Medicaid managed care health plan has spent with minority-owned and women-owned businesses that are certified by other agencies or private organizations:

<b>Year</b>	<b>MWBE Certified Business Spend</b>
CY 2019	\$32,817,005.00
CY 2020	\$22,434,660.13

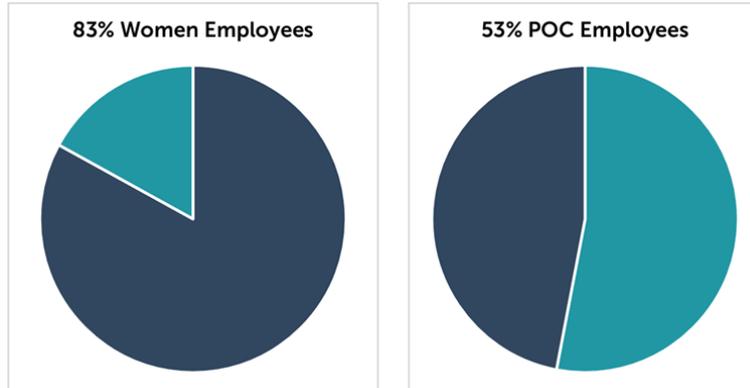
- The amount of money the Medicaid managed care health plan has spent with not-for-profit, community-based organizations serving predominantly minority communities, as defined by the Department.



- The proportion of minorities, people with disabilities, and women that make up the staff of the Medicaid managed care health plan.

Meridian employs 1,133 people. More than half (53%) of our employees are people of color, and 83 percent are women.

Women represent 64 percent of employees in supervisory positions and more than 30 percent of our executive team. Nearly 40 percent of our company's leadership are people of color.



6. Recommendations for increasing expenditures with minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Meridian has established a robust reporting and accountability structure to monitor the success of its BEP commitment. We have a process to ensure diverse suppliers are at the forefront of any and all procurement opportunities for the Illinois market. We take pride in our ability to assist, collaborate, and mentor our MWRPD suppliers in our communities.

**\* Please see the following bullets summarizing Meridian's recommendations**

- a. Our Corporate Director of Supplier Diversity has partnered with the Illinois market to assist with the BEP initiative by bringing corporate best practices to the health plan.
- b. Local market staff dedicated to BEP vendor management including recruitment, internal and external training and education, and tracking and reporting.
- c. HFS and CMS collaboration on program enhancements to increase the provider pool of BEP certified third parties in the healthcare space.
- d. Re-examine program limitations such as reciprocity and revenue cap to promote long term partnership with minority and women owned businesses.
- e. Working with policy makers, regulators, and stakeholders to increase the engagement within the healthcare industry.
- f. Inclusion of a more robust program visibility to bring more qualified BEP eligible relationships to the state of Illinois.
- g. Continuous rapport with known BEP businesses to assess scopes and scalabilities.
- h. Engaging with a BEP certified consultant to implement industry wide best practices on supplier diversity.
- i. Implementing a flow down BEP requirement to all primary contracted vendors.



7. A list of the types of services to which the Medicaid managed care health plan is contemplating adding new vendors.
  - a. Meridian is currently engaged in a review of all Illinois vendor spend to determine areas of opportunity for BEP vendors. Our areas of focus include:
    - i. Telehealth
    - ii. Durable Medical Equipment
    - iii. Care Management Solutions
    - iv. Transportation
    - v. NICU Utilization Review
    - vi. Member incentive and reward programs
    - vii. Over-the-Counter Pharmacy Benefit administrator
    - viii. Vision
  - b. This is not an all-inclusive list. Rather, it represents the plan's highest priority initiatives. Meridian will continue to explore any and all opportunities to partner with and invest in MWPD businesses.
  
8. The certifications the Medicaid managed care health plan accepts for minority-owned and women-owned businesses.
  - Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
  - Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
  - Female Business Enterprise (FBE)
  - Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)
  - Sheltered Workshop (SWS)
  - Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)
  - Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VET)
  - Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)
  - Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)
  - Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
  - Business Enterprises Owned by People with Disabilities (BEPD)
  - Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)

\* More information can be found at: [www.centene.com/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion](http://www.centene.com/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion)
  
9. The point of contact for potential vendors seeking to do business with the Medicaid managed care health plan.
  - Primary Contact: [Supplier.Diversity@mhplan.com](mailto:Supplier.Diversity@mhplan.com)
  - Website: <https://corp.mhplan.com/en/supplier-diversity/>
  - Eric Johns, Director of Vendor Management : [eric.johns@mhplan.com](mailto:eric.johns@mhplan.com) Phone: (312) 705-6850
  - Matthew Purcell, Senior Compliance Analyst : [Matthew.L.Purcell@centene.com](mailto:Matthew.L.Purcell@centene.com)



## *CONCLUSION*

Our commitment to BEP and its underlying goals are woven into our DNA and extend beyond the narrow limits of the statute. We understood that more action was needed, and we have responded with results. We saw exponential growth throughout 2020 and are confident we will exceed our BEP goals in 2021 and beyond. We will continue to collaborate across stakeholders to maintain improvement trends and will ensure that diverse organizations across the state can build successful and sustainable partnerships with Meridian. We look forward to actively participating in and supporting the program and welcome collaborative conversation pertaining to our current 2021 achievements and future plans.