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# Audit won't silence ValueOptions

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A group of state legislators has asked the state auditor to examine the books of ValueOptions New Mexico, a step that we believe would be a pointless and redundant effort at the expense of the taxpaying public.

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Despite totally clean audits already conducted by the state, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare in Washington and the Collaborative, the state seems to want to keep looking for trouble.

Perhaps they should instead perform a self-examination of the state's own payments to ValueOptions, which are frequently late. This pattern of late payments consistently left ValueOptions New Mexico with two choices: Pay providers late or advance the money out of our own pocket so the providers won't suffer.

Regularly, ValueOptions chose to pay providers with its own funds, in order to assure that they could continue to provide the treatment consumers need.

ValueOptions proudly served as the manager of behavioral health services for New Mexico for four years, until a bidding process that we consider flawed awarded the contract to United Healthgroup's company, Optum. ValueOptions has filed a protest of that award and will follow the path we are on, to court if necessary, in order to let a judge decide if the process was fair or not. Continued sanctions and audits by the Collaborative will not deter us from following through with our protest.

We believe in the judicial system, and will continue to pursue our protest — regardless of state sanctions or audits.

Meanwhile, providers in the state have already assembled a list of nearly three dozen complaints about the new vendor, United, after only two weeks of service. Where do the citizens of New Mexico think the state's audit money ought to be spent now?