

WELLCARE HEALTH PLANS, INC.
Form S-3ASR
August 06, 2012

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 6, 2012
Registration Statement No. 333-

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

Form S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

WellCare Health Plans, Inc.
(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Delaware
(State or Other Jurisdiction of

47-0937650
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

Incorporation or Organization)

8725 Henderson Road
Renaissance One
Tampa, Florida 33634
(813) 290-6200

(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Registrant's Principal Executive
Offices)

Mr. Alec Cunningham
Chief Executive Officer
WellCare Health Plans, Inc.
8725 Henderson Road
Renaissance One
Tampa, Florida 33634
(813) 290-6200

(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Agent for Service)

Copies to:
William G. Farrar, Esq.
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
125 Broad Street
New York, New York 10004
Phone: (212) 558-4000
Facsimile: (212) 558-1600

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after this Registration Statement becomes effective.

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box.

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of “large accelerated filer,” “accelerated filer” and “smaller reporting company” in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer
 Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Smaller reporting company

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered/Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit/Proposed Maximum Offering Price (1)(2)	Amount of Registration Fee (3)(4)
Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share		
Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share		
Depository Shares		
Warrants		
Securities Purchase Contracts		
Units		
Debt Securities		
Total		

(1) This registration statement covers an indeterminate aggregate initial offering price or number of securities of each identified class as may from time to time be issued at indeterminate prices. In addition, securities registered hereunder may be sold either separately or as units consisting of more than one type of security registered hereunder. Separate consideration may or may not be received for securities that are issuable on exercise, conversion or exchange of other securities or that are issued in units or represented by depository shares.

(2) In United States dollars or the equivalent thereof in any other currency, currency unit or units, or composite currency or currencies.

(3) In accordance with Rule 456(b) and Rule 456(r) under the Securities Act, the Registrant is deferring payment of all of the registration fees.

(4) Each depositary share will be issued under a deposit agreement, will represent an interest in a fractional share or multiple shares of preferred stock and will be evidenced by a depositary receipt.

PROSPECTUS

Common Stock

Preferred Stock
Depository Shares
Warrants
Securities Purchase Contracts
Units
Debt Securities

WellCare Health Plans, Inc. may offer and sell, from time to time, in one or more offerings any combination of the following securities: common stock, preferred stock, depository shares, warrants, securities purchase contracts, units and debt securities in amounts, at initial prices, and on terms determined at the time of offering.

This prospectus describes some of the general terms that may apply to these securities and the general manner in which they may be offered. The specific terms of any securities to be offered, the specific manner in which they may be offered, will be described in a supplement to this prospectus.

We may offer and sell the securities to or through one or more underwriters, dealers and agents, or directly to purchasers, on a continuous or delayed basis.

Our common stock is listed on The New York Stock Exchange, or NYSE, under the symbol "WCG."

You should read this entire prospectus, the documents that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus and any prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in us.

Investing in the securities involves risks. See "Risk Factors," beginning on page 2 and, if applicable, any risk factors described in any accompanying prospectus supplement and in our Securities and Exchange Commission filings that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities regulators have approved or disapproved these securities, or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

This prospectus is dated August 6, 2012.

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ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, utilizing a “shelf” registration process. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we offer securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement and attach it to this prospectus. The prospectus supplement will contain specific information about the nature of the persons offering securities and the terms of the securities being offered at that time. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, together with any additional information you may need to make your investment decision.

We have provided you only with the information contained in this prospectus, including information incorporated by reference in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of any other information that others may give you. We are not making an offer to sell securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale of securities is not permitted. You should not assume that the information included in this prospectus, any applicable prospectus supplement, or the documents incorporated by reference herein is accurate as of any date other than their respective dates. Our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

You should read carefully the entire prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement, as well as the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus, before making an investment decision.

When used in this prospectus, except where the context otherwise requires, the terms “we,” “us,” “our” and “the Company” refer to WellCare Health Plans, Inc.

RISK FACTORS

Investing in the securities described herein involves risk. We urge you to carefully consider the risk factors described in our filings with the SEC that are incorporated by reference into this prospectus and, if applicable, in any prospectus supplement used in connection with an offering of our securities, as well as the information relating to us identified herein in “Cautionary Statement Concerning Forward-Looking Statements”, before making an investment decision. Although we discuss key risks in our discussion of risk factors, new risks may emerge in the future, which may prove to be significant. Our subsequent filings with the SEC may contain amended and updated discussions of significant risks. We cannot predict future risks or estimate the extent to which they may affect our financial performance.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. You may read and copy any reports, statements or other information on file at the SEC’s public reference room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. The SEC filings are also available to the public from commercial document retrieval services. These filings are also available at the Internet website maintained by the SEC at www.sec.gov. You can also inspect copies of our public filings at the offices of the NYSE.

We have filed with the SEC a “shelf” registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, relating to the securities that may be offered by this prospectus. This prospectus is a part of that registration statement, but does not contain all of the information in the registration statement. We have omitted parts of the

registration statement in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC. For more detail about us and the securities that may be offered by this prospectus, you may examine the registration statement on Form S-3 and the exhibits filed with it at the locations listed in the previous paragraph.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

We incorporate information into this prospectus by reference, which means that we disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus, except to the extent superseded by information contained herein or by information contained in documents filed with the SEC after the date of this prospectus. This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below, that have been previously filed with the SEC (other than, in each case, documents or information deemed to have been furnished and not filed in accordance with SEC rules):

- our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011, filed with the SEC on February 15, 2012 (File No. 001-32209);
- our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended March 31, 2012 filed on May 2, 2012 and our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended June 30, 2012 filed on August 3, 2012;
- our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 5, 2012, January 17, 2012, February 17, 2012, February 24, 2012, March 7, 2012, March 23, 2012, April 3, 2012, May 23, 2012, July 2, 2012, July 13, 2012 and July 23, 2012; and
- our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on June 9, 2004 (File No. 001-32209), which incorporates by reference the description of our common stock from our Registration Statement on Form S-1 (File No. 333-112829), and any amendment or report filed for the purpose of updating such description.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 from the date of this prospectus until all of the securities to which this prospectus relates have been sold or the offering is otherwise terminated; provided, however, that we are not incorporating by reference any additional documents or information furnished and not filed with the SEC.

You may obtain copies of any of these filings by contacting us at the address and phone number indicated below or by contacting the SEC as described above. Documents incorporated by reference are available from us without charge, excluding all exhibits unless an exhibit has been specifically incorporated by reference into this prospectus, by requesting them in writing, by telephone or via the Internet at:

WellCare Health Plans, Inc.
8725 Henderson Road
Renaissance One
Tampa, Florida 33634
(813) 290-6200
Attn: Investor Relations Department
Internet Website: www.wellcare.com

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON OUR WEBSITE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A PART OF, AND IS NOT INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE INTO, THIS PROSPECTUS.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Statements contained in this prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement, together with other documents and information incorporated by reference into this prospectus, which are not historical fact may be forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and Section 21E of the Exchange Act, and we intend such statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained therein. Such statements may address, among other things, market acceptance of our products and services, product development, our ability to finance growth opportunities, our ability to respond to changes in laws and government regulations, implementation of our sales and marketing strategies, projected capital expenditures, liquidity and the availability of additional funding sources. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terminology such as “may,” “will,” “should,” “expects,” “plans,” “anticipates,” “believes,” “estimates,” “targets,” “predicts,” “potential,” “continues” or the negative of such terms or other comparable terminology. Many of the factors that will determine the outcome of these and our other forward-looking statements are beyond our ability to control or predict. You are cautioned that forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties, including economic, regulatory, competitive and other factors that may affect our business. These forward-looking statements are inherently susceptible to uncertainty and changes in circumstances, as they are based on management’s current expectations and beliefs about future events and circumstances. All subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements attributable to us or any person acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by the cautionary statements contained or referred to in this section. We undertake no obligation beyond that required by law to update publicly any forward-looking statements for any reason, even if new information becomes available or other events occur in the future.

Our actual results may differ materially from those indicated by forward-looking statements as a result of various important factors including:

- the expiration, cancellation or suspension of our state and federal contracts,
- our ability to accurately predict and effectively manage health benefits and other operating expenses,
 - competition,
- our ability to successfully obtain new contracts and renew our existing contracts,
- our ability to comply with the terms of our state and federal contracts, including those terms related to quality standards,
 - changes in health care practices,
- changes in federal or state laws and regulations or their interpretations,
 - changes in inflation,
 - provider contract changes,
- changes in our contracts with government agencies,
 - new technologies,
- government-imposed surcharges, taxes or assessments,

- reductions in provider payments by governmental payors,
 - major epidemics,
 - disasters,
- major health care providers' inability to maintain their operations,
- availability of debt and equity financing on terms that are favorable to us, and
 - general economic and market conditions.

For further discussion of factors that could materially affect the outcome of our forward-looking statements, see "Item 1A. Risk Factors" in our Annual Report on Form 10-K, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and, to the extent applicable, our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and the accompanying prospectus supplement.

OUR COMPANY

Through our licensed subsidiaries, as of June 30, 2012, we operated our Medicaid health plans in Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, New York and Ohio through our licensed subsidiaries. We also operated our Medicare Advantage, or MA, coordinated care plans, or CCPs, administered through our health maintenance organizations, or HMOS, and insurance subsidiaries, in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Texas, as well as a stand-alone Medicare prescription drug plan, or PDP, in 49 states and the District of Columbia. We believe that our broad range of experience and exclusive government focus allows us to effectively serve our members, partner with our providers and government clients, and efficiently manage our ongoing operations.

All of our Medicare plans are offered under the WellCare name, for which we hold a federal trademark registration, with the exception of our Hawaii CCP, which we offer under the name 'Ohana. Conversely, we offer our Medicaid plans under a number of brand names depending on the state, consisting of the Staywell and HealthEase brands in Florida, the 'Ohana brand in Hawaii, the Harmony brand name in Illinois and Missouri and the WellCare brand name in Georgia, Kentucky, New York and Ohio.

We were formed as a Delaware limited liability company in May 2002 to acquire our Florida, New York and Connecticut health plans. The acquisition of the health plans was completed through two concurrent transactions in July 2002. In July 2004, immediately prior to the closing of our initial public offering, the limited liability company was merged into a Delaware corporation and we changed our name to WellCare Health Plans, Inc.

Our principal executive offices are located at 8725 Henderson Road, Renaissance One, Tampa, Florida 33634, and our telephone number is (813) 290-6200. We maintain a website at www.wellcare.com. The information on our website is not incorporated by reference into, and you must not consider the information to be, a part of this prospectus.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless we specify otherwise in a prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of securities by us to provide additional funds for general corporate purposes, which may include:

- reducing or refinancing debt;

- funding investments in, or extensions of credit to, our subsidiaries;
- financing acquisitions;
- working capital; and
- redeeming outstanding securities.

Pending such use, we may temporarily invest net proceeds in highly liquid assets.

CONSOLIDATED RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

We have computed our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of our fiscal years ended December 31, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 and for the six months ended June 30, 2012. The computation of earnings to fixed charges is set forth on Exhibit 12.1 to the Registration Statement of which this prospectus forms a part. If we offer preference equity securities under this prospectus, then we will, if required at that time, provide a ratio of combined fixed charges and preference dividends to earnings in the applicable prospectus supplement for such offering.

Ratio of earnings to fixed charges is calculated by dividing earnings by fixed charges from operations for the periods indicated. In accordance with Item 503(d) of Regulation S-K under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), for purposes of calculating the ratio of earnings to fixed charges: (a) fixed charges represents interest expense, amortization of debt costs and the portion of rental expense representing the interest factor; and (b) earnings represents the aggregate of income from continuing operations (before adjustment for income taxes) and fixed charges.

Our ratios of earnings to fixed charges are set forth below for the periods indicated:

	2007	Year Ended December 31,				Six Months Ended
		2008	2009	2010	2011	June 30, 2012
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges	24.08	(a)	17.82	(a)	58.66	65.98

- (a) The ratio coverage was less than 1:1. For the year ended December 31, 2010, we would have needed to generate additional earnings of \$72.9 million as earnings were inadequate to cover fixed charges as a result of investigation-related litigation and other resolution costs. For the year ended December 31, 2008, we would have needed to generate additional earnings of \$53.2 million as earnings were inadequate to cover fixed charges as a result of a goodwill impairment recorded in 2008 for our Medicare reporting unit.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The following description sets forth certain general terms of the common stock to which a prospectus supplement may relate. The following description of our common stock and provisions of our certificate of incorporation and bylaws are only summaries. For a complete statement of the terms and rights of our common stock, you should review the description of our common stock in the Form 8-A, which we have incorporated by reference, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, as amended to date, and our amended and restated bylaws,

which we have filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and Delaware corporate law.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote per share on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders. Holders of common stock do not have cumulative voting rights. Holders of common stock are entitled to receive dividends as may be declared from time to time by the board of directors out of funds legally available for the payment of dividends, subject to the preferences that apply to any outstanding preferred stock. Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holders of common stock are entitled to share ratably in all assets remaining after payment of liabilities and after giving effect to the liquidation preference of any outstanding preferred stock. The holders of common stock have no preemptive or conversion rights and no additional subscription rights. There are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to the common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are fully paid and nonassessable. Any shares issued pursuant to this prospectus will be fully paid and nonassessable.

Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation, as amended, provides that we may issue up to 100,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share. As of July 27, 2012, there were 43,096,343 shares of our common stock outstanding.

Delaware Anti-Takeover Law and Provisions in Our Charter and Bylaws

Delaware Anti-Takeover Statute. We are subject to Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. In general, these provisions prohibit a Delaware corporation from engaging in any business combination with any interested stockholder for a period of three years following the date that the stockholder became an interested stockholder, unless the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder is approved in a manner presented in Section 203 of the Delaware General Corporation Law. Generally, a “business combination” is defined to include mergers, asset sales and other transactions resulting in financial benefit to a stockholder. In general, an “interested stockholder” is a person who, together with affiliates and associates, owns, or within three years, did own, 15% or more of a corporation’s voting stock.

Certificate of Incorporation. Our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that:

- our board of directors may issue, without further action by the stockholders, up to 20,000,000 shares of undesignated preferred stock;
- any action to be taken by our stockholders must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting and not by a consent in writing;
- vacancies on the board, including newly-created directorships, can be filled for the remainder of the relevant term by a majority of the directors then in office;
- Our directors are elected annually and serve for one-year terms until the expiration of the term for which they are elected, and until their successors have been duly elected and qualified;
- Subject to the rights of the holders of any series of Preferred Stock then outstanding, any director may be removed from office at any time with or without cause at a meeting called for that purpose, but only by the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 66-2/3% of the voting power of all our shares entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

Bylaws. Our amended and restated bylaws provide that stockholders seeking to bring business before an annual meeting of stockholders or to nominate candidates for election as directors at an annual meeting of stockholders, must provide timely notice to us in writing. To be timely, a stockholder's notice must be received at our principal executive offices not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting of stockholders. In the event that the annual meeting is called for a date that is not within 30 days before or 60 days after the anniversary date, in order to be timely notice from the stockholder must be received: not earlier than 120 days prior to the annual meeting of stockholders; and not later than 90 days prior to the annual meeting of stockholders or the tenth day following the date on which notice of the annual meeting was made public.

In the case of a special meeting of stockholders called for the purpose of electing directors, notice by the stockholder, in order to be timely, must be received: not later than on the tenth day following the day on which the notice of the date of the special meeting was mailed or public disclosure of the date of the special meeting was made, whichever first occurs.

Our amended and restated bylaws also specify requirements as to the form and content of a stockholder's notice. These provisions may preclude stockholders from bringing matters before an annual or special meeting of stockholders or from making nominations for directors at an annual or special meeting of stockholders or from making nominations for directors at an annual or special meeting of stockholders. In addition, our amended and restated certificate of incorporation permits our board of directors to amend or repeal our amended and restated bylaws by majority vote, but requires the affirmative vote of at least 66-2/3% of the voting power of all our shares entitled to vote, voting together as a single class.

The provisions in our amended and restated certificate of incorporation and our amended and restated bylaws are intended to enhance the likelihood of continuity and stability in the composition of the board of directors and in the policies formulated by the board of directors and to discourage certain types of transactions that may involve an actual or threatened change of control of WellCare. These provisions also are designed to reduce our vulnerability to an unsolicited proposal for a takeover of WellCare that does not contemplate the acquisition of all of our outstanding shares or an unsolicited proposal for the restructuring or sale of all or part of WellCare. These provisions, however, could discourage potential acquisition proposals and could delay or prevent a change in control of WellCare. They also may have the effect of preventing changes in our management.

Transfer Agent

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Computershare Trust Company, N.A.

Listing

Our common stock is listed on the NYSE under the symbol “WCG.”

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

The following outlines some of the provisions of the preferred stock that we may offer from time to time. The specific terms of a series of preferred stock will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to that series of preferred stock. The following description of the preferred stock and any description of preferred stock in a prospectus supplement may not be complete and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to the certificate of designations relating to the particular series of preferred stock, which we will file with the SEC in connection with the public offering of any preferred stock.

General

Under our restated certificate of incorporation, our board of directors is authorized, without stockholder approval, to adopt resolutions providing for the issuance of up to 20,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$.01 per share, in one or more series.

For each series of preferred stock the board of directors may fix the voting powers, designations, preferences and relative participating, optional or other rights, if any, and any qualifications, limitations and restrictions of the series. The board will fix these terms by resolution adopted before we issue any shares of the series of preferred stock. We may also “reopen” a previously issued series of preferred stock and issue additional preferred stock of that series.

In addition, as described under “DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES,” we may, instead of offering full shares of any series of preferred stock, offer depositary shares evidenced by depositary receipts, each representing a fraction of a share of the particular series of preferred stock issued and deposited with a depositary. The fraction of a share of preferred stock which each depositary share represents will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to the depositary shares.

The prospectus supplement relating to the particular series of preferred stock will contain a description of the specific terms of that series as fixed by the board of directors, including, as applicable:

- the offering price at which we will issue the preferred stock;
- the title, designation of number of shares and stated value of the preferred stock;
- the dividend rate or method of calculation, the payment dates for dividends and the place or places where the dividends will be paid, whether dividends will be cumulative or noncumulative, and, if cumulative, the dates from which dividends will begin to cumulate;
- any conversion or exchange rights;

- whether the preferred stock will be subject to redemption and the redemption price and other terms and conditions relative to the redemption rights;
 - any liquidation rights;
 - any sinking fund provisions;
 - any voting rights; and
- any other rights, preferences, privileges, limitations and restrictions that are not inconsistent with the terms of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation.

Subject to the rights of the holders of any series of preferred stock, the number of authorized shares of any series of preferred stock may be increased or decreased, but not below the number of shares of that series then outstanding, by resolution adopted by our board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote on the matter, voting together as a single class. No separate vote of the holders of any series of preferred stock is required for an increase or decrease in the number of authorized shares of that series.

When we issue and receive payment for shares of preferred stock, the shares will be fully paid and nonassessable, and for each share issued, a sum equal to the stated value will be credited to our preferred stock account. Unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement relating to a particular series of preferred stock, holders of preferred stock will not have any preemptive or subscription rights to acquire more of our stock and each series of preferred stock will rank on a parity in all respects with each other series of preferred stock and prior to our common stock as to dividends and any distribution of our assets.

The rights of holders of the preferred stock offered may be adversely affected by the rights of holders of any shares of preferred stock that may be issued in the future. Our board of directors may cause shares of preferred stock to be issued in public or private transactions for any proper corporate purposes and may include issuances to obtain additional financing in connection with acquisitions, and issuances to officers, directors and employees pursuant to benefit plans. Our board of directors' ability to issue shares of preferred stock may discourage attempts by others to acquire control of us without negotiation with our board of directors, as it may make it difficult for a person to complete an acquisition of us without negotiating with our board.

Redemption

If so specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, a series of preferred stock may be redeemable at any time, in whole or in part, at our option or the holders', and may be mandatorily redeemed.

Any restriction on the repurchase or redemption by us of our preferred stock while we are in arrears in the payment of dividends will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Any partial redemptions of preferred stock will be made in a way that our board of directors decides is equitable.

Unless we default in the payment of the redemption price, dividends will cease to accrue after the redemption date of shares of preferred stock called for redemption and all rights of holders of these shares will terminate except for the right to receive the redemption price.

Dividends

Holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive cash dividends when, as and if declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available for dividends. The rates and dates of payment of dividends will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to each series of preferred stock. Dividends will be payable to holders of record of preferred stock as they appear on our books on the record dates fixed by the board of directors. Dividends on any series of preferred stock may be cumulative or noncumulative.

We may not declare, pay or set apart funds for payment of dividends on a particular series of preferred stock unless full dividends on any other series of preferred stock that ranks equally with or senior to the series of preferred stock have been paid or sufficient funds have been set apart for payment for either of the following:

- all prior dividend periods of the other series of preferred stock that pay dividends on a cumulative basis; or
- the immediately preceding dividend period of the other series of preferred stock that pays dividends on a noncumulative basis.

Partial dividends declared on shares of any series of preferred stock and other series of preferred stock ranking on an equal basis as to dividends will be declared pro rata. A pro rata declaration means that the ratio of dividends declared per share to accrued dividends per share will be the same for both series of preferred stock.

Liquidation Preference

In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding-up, holders of each series of our preferred stock will have the right to receive distributions upon liquidation in the amount described in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to each series of preferred stock, plus an amount equal to any accrued and unpaid dividends. These distributions will be made before any distribution is made on the common stock or on any securities ranking junior to the preferred stock upon liquidation, dissolution or winding-up.

If the liquidation amounts payable relating to the preferred stock of any series and any other securities ranking on a parity regarding liquidation rights are not paid in full, the holders of the preferred stock of these series and other securities will have the right to a ratable portion of our available assets, up to the full liquidation preference. Holders of these series of preferred stock or other securities will not be entitled to any other amounts from us after they have received their full liquidation preference.

Voting Rights

The holders of shares of preferred stock will have no voting rights, except:

- as otherwise stated in the applicable prospectus supplement;
- as otherwise stated in the certificate of designations establishing the series; or
- as required by applicable law.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent, registrar and dividend disbursement agent for the preferred stock will be stated in the applicable prospectus supplement. The registrar for shares of preferred stock will send notices to stockholders of any meetings at which holders of the preferred stock have the right to elect directors or to vote on any other matter.

Governing Law

The preferred stock will be governed by Delaware law.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

The following briefly summarizes the provisions of the depositary shares and depositary receipts that we may issue from time to time and which would be important to holders of depositary receipts, other than pricing and related terms which will be disclosed in the applicable prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will also state whether any of the generalized provisions summarized below do not apply to the depositary shares or depositary receipts being offered. The following description and any description in a prospectus supplement may not be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to the terms and provisions of the deposit agreement which we will file with the SEC in connection with any issuance of depositary shares.

Description of Depositary Shares

We may offer depositary shares evidenced by depositary receipts. Each depositary receipt represents a fraction of a share, or multiple shares, of the particular series of preferred stock issued and deposited with a depositary. The fraction of a share, or multiple shares, of preferred stock which each depositary share represents will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We will deposit the shares of any series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares according to the provisions of a deposit agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company which we will select as our preferred stock depositary. We will name the depositary in the applicable prospectus supplement. Each owner of a depositary share will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the underlying preferred stock in proportion to the applicable fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by the depositary share. These rights include dividend, voting, redemption, conversion and liquidation rights. The depositary will send the holders of depositary shares all reports and communications that we deliver to the depositary and which we are required to furnish to the holders of depositary shares.

Depositary Receipts

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to anyone who is buying the fractional shares of preferred stock in accordance with the terms of the applicable prospectus supplement.

While definitive engraved depositary receipts (certificates) are being prepared, we may instruct the depositary to issue temporary depositary receipts, which will entitle holders to all the rights of the definitive depositary receipts and be substantially in the same form. The depositary will prepare definitive depositary receipts without unreasonable delay, and we will pay for the exchange of your temporary depositary receipts for definitive depositary receipts.

Withdrawal of Preferred Stock

Unless the related depositary shares have previously been called for redemption, a holder of depositary shares may receive the number of whole shares of the series of preferred stock and any money or other property represented by the holder's depositary receipts after surrendering the depositary receipts at the corporate trust office of the depositary, paying any taxes, charges and fees provided for in the deposit agreement and complying with any other requirement of the deposit agreement. Partial shares of preferred stock will not be issued. If the surrendered depositary shares exceed the number of depositary shares that represent the number of whole shares of preferred stock the holder wishes to withdraw, then the depositary will deliver to the holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing the excess number of depositary shares. Once the holder has withdrawn the preferred stock, the holder will not be entitled to re-deposit that preferred stock under the deposit agreement or to receive depositary shares in exchange for such preferred stock. We do not expect that there will be any public trading market for withdrawn shares of preferred stock.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary will pay to holders of depositary shares the cash dividends or other cash distributions it receives on preferred stock, after deducting its fees and expenses. Each holder will receive these distributions in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by the holder. The depositary will distribute only whole United States dollars and cents. The depositary will add any fractional cents not distributed to the next sum received for distribution to record holders of depositary shares.

In the event of a non-cash distribution, the depositary will distribute property to the record holders of depositary shares, unless the depositary determines that it is not feasible to make such a distribution. If this occurs, the depositary may, with our approval, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds from the sale to the holders.

The amounts distributed to holders of depositary shares will be reduced by any amounts required to be withheld by the depositary or by us on account of taxes or other governmental charges.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

If the series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares is subject to redemption, then we will give the necessary proceeds to the depositary upon redemption of the preferred stock. The depositary will then redeem the depositary shares using the funds they received from us for the preferred stock. The depositary will notify the record holders of the depositary shares to be redeemed not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days before the date fixed for redemption at the holders' addresses appearing in the depositary's books. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the redemption price payable per share for the applicable series of the preferred stock and any other amounts per share payable with respect to the preferred stock multiplied by the fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by one depositary share. Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem the depositary shares representing the shares of preferred stock on the same day. If fewer than all the depositary shares of a series are to be redeemed, the depositary shares will be selected by lot or ratably or by any other equitable methods as the depositary will decide.

After the date fixed for redemption, the depositary shares called for redemption will no longer be considered outstanding. Therefore, all rights of holders of the depositary shares will cease, except that the holders will still be entitled to receive any cash payable upon the redemption and any money or other property to which the holder was entitled at the time of redemption. To receive this amount or other property, the holders must surrender the depositary receipts evidencing their depositary shares to the depositary. Any funds that we deposit with the depositary for any depositary shares that the holders fail to redeem will be returned to us after a period of two years from the date we deposit the funds.

Voting the Preferred Stock

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of preferred stock represented by depositary shares are entitled to vote, the depositary will notify holders of depositary shares of the upcoming vote and arrange to deliver our voting materials to the holders. The record date for determining holders of depositary shares that are entitled to vote will be the same as the record date for the preferred stock. The materials the holders will receive will (1) describe the matters to be voted on and (2) explain how the holders, on a certain date, may instruct the depositary to vote the shares of preferred stock underlying the depositary shares. For instructions to be valid, the depositary must receive them on or before the date specified. The depositary will try, as far as practical, to vote the shares as instructed by the holder. We will take all reasonable actions requested by the depositary in order to enable it to vote as a holder has instructed. If any holder does not instruct the depositary how to vote the holder's shares, the depositary will abstain from voting those shares or may vote them proportionately with instructions received.

Conversion or Exchange

If the prospectus supplement relating to the depositary shares states that the deposited preferred stock is convertible or exercisable or exchangeable, the following will apply. The depositary will convert or exchange all depositary shares on the same day that the preferred stock underlying the depositary shares is converted or exchanged. In order for the depositary to do so, we will need to deposit the other preferred stock, common stock or other securities into which the preferred stock is to be converted or for which it will be exchanged.

The exchange or conversion rate per depositary share will be equal to:

- the exchange or conversion rate per share of preferred stock, multiplied by the fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by one depositary share;
- plus all money and any other property represented by one depositary share; and
- including all amounts per depositary share paid by us for dividends that have accrued on the preferred stock on the exchange or conversion date and that have not yet been paid.

The depositary shares, as such, cannot be converted or exchanged into other preferred stock, common stock, securities of another issuer or any other securities or property of us. Nevertheless, if so specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, a holder of depositary shares may be able to surrender the depositary receipts to the depositary with written instructions asking the depositary to instruct us to convert or exchange the preferred stock represented by the depositary shares into other shares of our preferred stock or common stock or to exchange the preferred stock for securities of another issuer. If the depositary shares carry this right, we would agree that, upon the payment of any applicable fees, we will cause the conversion or exchange of the preferred stock using the same procedures as we use for the delivery of preferred stock. If a holder is only converting part of the depositary shares represented by a depositary receipt, new depositary receipts will be issued for any depositary shares that are not converted or exchanged.

Amendment and Termination of the Deposit Agreement

We may agree with the depositary to amend the deposit agreement and the form of depositary receipt without consent of the holder at any time. However, if the amendment adds or increases fees or charges, other than any change in the fees of any depositary registrar or transfer agent, or prejudices an important right of holders, it will become effective only with the approval of holders of at least a majority of the affected depositary shares then outstanding. If an amendment becomes effective, holders are deemed to agree to the amendment and to be bound by the amended

deposit agreement if they continue to hold their depositary receipts.

The deposit agreement automatically terminates if:

- all outstanding depositary shares have been redeemed or converted or exchanged for any other securities into which they or the underlying preferred stock are convertible or exchangeable; or
- a final distribution in respect of the preferred stock has been made to the holders of depositary receipts in connection with our liquidation, dissolution or winding-up.

We may also terminate the deposit agreement at any time we wish. If we do so, the depositary will give notice of termination to the holders not less than 30 days before the termination date. Once depositary receipts are surrendered to the depositary, it will send to each holder the number of whole or fractional shares of the series of preferred stock underlying that holder's depositary receipts.

Charges of Depositary and Expenses

We will pay the fees, charges and expenses of the depositary provided in the deposit agreement to be payable by us. Holders of depositary receipts will pay any taxes and governmental charges and any charges provided in the deposit agreement to be payable by them. If the depositary incurs fees, charges or expenses for which it is not otherwise liable at the election of a holder of a depositary receipt or other person, that holder or other person will be liable for those fees, charges and expenses.

Limitations on Our Obligations and Liability to Holders of Depositary Receipts

The deposit agreement will limit our obligations and the obligations of the depositary. It will also limit our liability and the liability of the depositary as follows:

- we and the depositary will only be obligated to take the actions specifically set forth in the deposit agreement in good faith;
- we and the depositary will not be liable if either of us is prevented or delayed by law or circumstances beyond our control from performing our obligations under the deposit agreement;
- we and the depositary will not be liable if either of us exercises discretion permitted under the deposit agreement;
- we and the depositary will have no obligation to become involved in any legal or other proceeding related to the depositary receipts or the deposit agreement on your behalf or on behalf of any other party, unless you provide us with satisfactory indemnity; and
- we and the depositary will be permitted to rely upon any written advice of counsel or accountants and on any documents we and the depositary believe in good faith to be genuine and to have been signed or presented by the proper party.

In the deposit agreement, we and the depositary will agree to indemnify each other under certain circumstances.

Resignation and Removal of Depositary

The depositary may resign at any time by notifying us of its election to do so. In addition, we may remove the depositary at any time. The resignation or removal will take effect when we appoint a successor depositary and it accepts the appointment. We must appoint the successor depositary within 60 days after delivery of the notice of resignation or removal.

Form of Preferred Stock and Depositary Shares

We may issue preferred stock in book-entry form. Preferred stock in book-entry form will be represented by a global security registered in the name of a depositary, which will be the holder of all the shares of preferred stock represented by the global security. Those who own beneficial interests in shares of preferred stock will do so through participants in the depositary's system, and the rights of these indirect owners will be governed solely by the applicable procedures of the depositary and its participants. However, beneficial owners of any preferred stock in book-entry form will have the right to obtain their shares in non-global form. We describe book-entry securities below under "LEGAL OWNERSHIP AND BOOK-ENTRY ISSUANCE." All preferred stock will be issued in registered form.

We will issue depositary shares in book-entry form, to the same extent as we describe above for preferred stock. Depositary shares will be issued in registered form.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

General

We may issue warrants to purchase senior debt securities, subordinated debt securities, preferred stock, depositary shares, common stock or any combination of these securities and these warrants may be issued independently or together with any underlying securities and may be attached or separate from the underlying securities. We will issue each series of warrants under a separate warrant agreement to be entered into between us and a warrant agent. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrants of such series and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency for or with holders or beneficial owners of warrants. The following outlines some of the general terms and provisions of the warrants. Further material terms of the warrants and the applicable warrant agreement will be stated in the applicable prospectus supplement. The following description and any description of the warrants in a prospectus supplement may not be complete and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to the terms and provisions of the warrant agreement which we will file with the SEC in connection with any issuance of warrants.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any warrants, including the following:

- the title of the warrants;
- the total number of warrants;
- the price or prices at which we will issue the warrants;
- the currency or currencies investors may use to pay for the warrants;
- the designation and terms of the underlying securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants;

- the price at which and the currency or currencies, including composite currencies, in which investors may purchase the underlying securities purchasable upon exercise of the warrants;
- the date on which the right to exercise the warrants will commence and the date on which the right will expire;
 - whether we will issue the warrants in registered form or bearer form;
 - information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;
 - if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of warrants which may be exercised at any one time;
- if applicable, the designation and terms of the underlying securities with which the warrants are issued and the number of warrants issued with each underlying security;
- if applicable, the date on and after which the warrants and the related underlying securities will be separately transferable;
 - if applicable, a discussion of material United States federal income tax considerations;
 - the identity of the warrant agent;
 - the procedures and conditions relating to the exercise of the warrants; and
- any other terms of the warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of the warrants.

Warrant certificates may be exchanged for new warrant certificates of different denominations, and warrants may be exercised at the warrant agent's corporate trust office or any other office indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Prior to the exercise of their warrants, holders of warrants exercisable for debt securities will not have any of the rights of holders of the debt securities purchasable upon such exercise and will not be entitled to payments of principal (or premium, if any) or interest, if any, on the debt securities purchasable upon such exercise. Prior to the exercise of their warrants, holders of warrants exercisable for shares of preferred stock or common stock or for depositary shares will not have any rights of holders of the preferred stock, common stock or depositary shares purchasable upon such exercise and will not be entitled to dividend payments, if any, or voting rights of the preferred stock, common stock or depositary shares purchasable upon such exercise.

Exercise of Warrants

A warrant will entitle the holder to purchase for cash an amount of securities at an exercise price that will be stated in, or that will be determinable as described in, the applicable prospectus supplement. Warrants may be exercised at any time up to the close of business on the expiration date set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. After the close of business on the expiration date, unexercised warrants will become void.

Warrants may be exercised as set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Upon receipt of payment and the warrant certificate properly completed and duly executed at the corporate trust office of the warrant agent or any other office indicated in the prospectus supplement, we will, as soon as practicable, forward the securities purchasable upon such exercise. If less than all of the warrants represented by such warrant certificate are exercised, a new warrant certificate will be issued for the remaining warrants.

Enforceability of Rights; Governing Law

The holders of warrants, without the consent of the warrant agent, may, on their own behalf and for their own benefit, enforce, and may institute and maintain any suit, action or proceeding against us to enforce their rights to exercise and receive the securities purchasable upon exercise of their warrants. Unless otherwise stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, each issue of warrants and the applicable warrant agreement will be governed by the laws of the State of New York.

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITIES PURCHASE CONTRACTS

This section describes the general terms of the securities purchase contracts that we may offer and sell by this prospectus. This prospectus and any accompanying prospectus supplement will contain the material terms and conditions for each securities purchase contract. The accompanying prospectus supplement may add, update or change the terms and conditions of the securities purchase contracts described in this prospectus.

Stock Purchase Contracts

We may issue stock purchase contracts, representing contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and obligating us to sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of common stock or preferred stock at a future date or dates, or a variable number of shares of common stock or preferred stock for a stated amount of consideration. The price per share and the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock may be fixed at the time the stock purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the stock purchase contracts. Any such formula may include anti-dilution provisions to adjust the number of shares of common stock or preferred stock issuable pursuant to the stock purchase contracts upon certain events. The stock purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations in a specified manner and in certain circumstances we may deliver newly issued prepaid stock purchase contracts upon release to a holder of any collateral securing such holder's obligations under the original stock purchase contract.

The stock purchase contracts may be issued separately or as a part of units consisting of a stock purchase contract and, as security for the holder's obligations to purchase the shares under the stock purchase contracts, either (a) our senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities or (b) debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. Treasury securities. The stock purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the stock purchase units or vice versa, and such payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the general terms of any stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units, as well as any material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the stock purchase contracts and the stock purchase units. We will file with the SEC as exhibits to a report on Form 8-K forms of any stock purchase contracts to be issued either separately or as a part of stock purchase units.

Debt Purchase Contracts

We may issue debt purchase contracts, representing contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and obligating us to sell to the holders, a specified principal amount of debt securities at a future date or dates. The purchase price and the interest rate may be fixed at the time the debt purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the debt purchase contracts. The debt purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations in a specified manner and in certain circumstances we may deliver newly issued prepaid debt purchase contracts upon release to a holder of any collateral securing such holder's obligations under the original debt purchase contract.

The debt purchase contracts may be issued separately or as a part of units consisting of debt purchase contracts and, as security for the holder's obligations to purchase the securities under the debt purchase contracts, either (a) our senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities or (b) debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. Treasury securities. The debt purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders of the debt purchase units or vice versa, and such payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the general terms of: (a) any debt purchase contracts or debt purchase units; (b) the collateral arrangements and depositary arrangements, if applicable, relating to such debt purchase contracts or debt purchase units; and (c) if applicable, the prepaid debt purchase contracts and the document pursuant to which such prepaid debt purchase contracts will be issued. In addition, such prospectus supplement will describe any material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the debt purchase contracts and the debt purchase units. We will file with the SEC as exhibits to a report on Form 8-K forms of any debt purchase contracts that may be issued separately or as a part of debt purchase units.

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS

We may issue units comprised of one or more of the other securities described in this prospectus in any combination. Units may also include debt obligations of third parties, such as U.S. Treasury securities. Each unit will be issued so that the holder of the unit is also the holder of each security included in the unit. Thus, the holder of a unit will have the rights and obligations of a holder of each included security. The unit agreement under which a unit is issued may provide that the securities included in the unit may not be held or transferred separately at any time or at any time before a specified date.

The applicable prospectus supplement may describe:

- the price or prices at which we will issue the units;
- the designation and terms of the units and of the securities comprising the units, including whether and under what circumstances those securities may be held or transferred separately;
- any provisions for the issuance, payment, settlement, transfer or exchange of the units or of the securities comprising the units; and
- whether the units will be issued in fully registered or global form.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the material terms of any units. The preceding description and any description of units in the applicable prospectus supplement does not purport to be complete and is subject to and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the unit agreement and, if applicable, collateral arrangements and depositary arrangements relating to such units.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

Debt Securities May Be Senior or Subordinated

We may issue senior or subordinated debt securities. Neither the senior debt securities nor the subordinated debt securities will be secured by any of our property or assets or of our respective subsidiaries. Thus, by owning a debt security, you are an unsecured creditor of us.

None of our shareholders, officers, directors, or employees has any obligation for payment of debt securities or for any of our obligations, covenants or agreements contained in the debt securities or the applicable indenture. By accepting the debt securities, you waive and release all liability of this kind. The waiver and release are part of the consideration for the issuance of debt securities. This waiver and release will not apply to the liability of our subsidiaries solely in their capacity as guarantors of any series of our debt securities and solely to the extent of any such guarantees.

Senior debt securities will be issued under a senior indenture, and subordinated debt securities will be issued under a subordinated indenture, in each case as supplemented, if applicable. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, the trustee under the indentures will be The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. We will include in a supplement to this prospectus the specific terms of each series of debt securities being offered, including the terms, if any, on which a series of debt securities may be convertible into or exchangeable for common stock, preferred stock or other debt securities. The statements and descriptions in this prospectus or in any prospectus supplement regarding provisions of the indentures and debt securities are summaries of these provisions, do not purport to be complete and are subject to, and are qualified in their entirety by reference to, all of the provisions of the debt securities and the indentures (including any amendments or supplements we may enter into from time to time which are permitted under each indenture).

Unless otherwise specified in a prospectus supplement, the debt securities will be direct unsecured obligations of WellCare Health Plans, Inc., and will not be guaranteed by any of our subsidiaries. The senior debt securities will rank equally with any of our other senior and unsubordinated debt. The subordinated debt securities will be subordinate and junior in right of payment to any senior indebtedness. There may be subordinated debt securities that are senior or junior to other series of subordinated debt securities.

The applicable prospectus supplement will set forth the terms of each series of debt securities, including, if applicable:

- the title of the debt securities and whether the debt securities will be senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities;
 - any limit upon the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;
- whether the debt securities will be issued as registered securities, bearer securities or both, and any restrictions on the exchange of one form of debt securities for another and on the offer, sale and delivery of the debt securities in either form;
 - the date or dates on which the principal amount of the debt securities will mature;
- if the debt securities bear interest, the rate or rates at which the debt securities bear interest and the date or dates from which interest will accrue;
- if the debt securities bear interest, the dates on which interest will be payable and the regular record dates for interest payments;
- the place or places where the payment of principal, any premium and interest will be made, if other than or in addition to the Borough of Manhattan, The City of New York, where the debt securities may be surrendered for transfer or exchange and where notices or demands to or upon us may be served;
 - any optional redemption provisions, which would allow us to redeem the debt securities in whole or in part;

- any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate us to redeem, repay or purchase the debt securities;
- if the currency in which the debt securities will be issuable is United States dollars, the denominations in which any registered securities will be issuable, if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof, and the denominations in which any bearer securities will be issuable, if other than the denomination of \$5,000;
- if other than the entire principal amount, the portion of the principal amount of debt securities which will be payable upon a declaration of acceleration of the maturity of the debt securities;
- the inapplicability of any event of default or covenant set forth in the indenture relating to the debt securities, or the applicability of any other events of defaults or covenants in addition to the events of default or covenants set forth in the indenture relating to the debt securities;
- if a person other than The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. is to act as trustee for the debt securities, the name and location of the corporate trust office of that trustee;
 - if other than United States dollars, the currency in which the debt securities will be paid or denominated;
- if the debt securities are to be payable, at our election or the election of a holder of the debt securities, in a currency other than that in which the debt securities are denominated or stated to be payable, the terms and conditions upon which that election may be made, and the time and manner of determining the exchange rate between the currency in which the debt securities are denominated or stated to be payable and the currency in which the debt securities are to be so payable;
 - the designation of the original currency determination agent, if any;
- if the debt securities are issuable as indexed securities, the manner in which the amount of payments of principal, any premium and interest will be determined;
- if other than as set forth in the indenture, provisions for the satisfaction and discharge of that indenture with respect to the debt securities issued under that indenture;
- the date as of which any bearer securities and any global security will be dated if other than the date of original issuance of the first debt security of a particular series to be issued;
- whether and under what circumstances we will pay additional amounts to non-United States holders in respect of any tax assessment or government charge;
- whether the debt securities will be issued in whole or in part in the form of a global security or securities and, in that case, any depositary and global exchange agent for the global security or securities, whether the global form shall be permanent or temporary and, if applicable, the exchange date;
- if debt securities are to be issuable initially in the form of a temporary global security, the circumstances under which the temporary global security can be exchanged for definitive debt securities and whether the definitive debt securities will be registered securities, bearer securities or will be in global form and provisions relating to the payment of interest in respect of any portion of a global security payable in respect of an interest payment date prior to the exchange date;

- the extent and manner to which payment on or in respect of debt securities will be subordinated to the prior payment of our other liabilities and obligations;
- whether payment of any amount due under the debt securities will be guaranteed by one or more guarantors, including our subsidiaries;
- the forms of the debt securities; and
- any other terms of the debt securities, which terms shall not be inconsistent with the requirements of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended.

This prospectus is part of a registration statement that does not limit the aggregate principal amount of debt securities that we may issue and provides that we may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more series under one or more indentures, in each case with the same or various maturities, at premium, at par or at a discount. Unless indicated in a prospectus supplement, we may issue additional debt securities of a particular series without the consent of the holders of the debt securities of such series outstanding at the time of the issuance. Any such additional debt securities, together with all other outstanding debt securities of that series, will constitute a single series of debt securities under the applicable indenture.

Our Relationship with the Trustee

The Bank of New York Mellon has provided commercial banking and other services for us and our affiliates in the past and may do so in the future.

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. will initially serve as the trustee for the senior debt securities and the subordinated debt securities. We may appoint other parties to serve as trustee or co-trustee as may be indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement. Consequently, if an actual or potential event of default occurs with respect to any of these securities, the trustee may be considered to have a conflicting interest for purposes of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939. In that case, the trustee may be required to resign under one or more of the indentures, and the issuer of the debt securities would be required to appoint a successor trustee. For this purpose, a “potential” event of default means an event that would be an event of default if the requirements for giving the issuer of the debt securities default notice or for the default having to exist for a specific period of time were disregarded.

LEGAL OWNERSHIP AND BOOK-ENTRY ISSUANCE

In this section, we describe special considerations that will apply to registered securities issued in global—i.e., book-entry—form. First we describe the difference between legal ownership and indirect ownership of registered securities. Then we describe special provisions that apply to global securities.

Who Is the Legal Owner of a Registered Security?

Each debt security, common or preferred share and depositary share in registered form will be represented either by a certificate issued in definitive form to a particular investor or by one or more global securities representing the entire issuance of securities. We refer to those who have securities registered in their own names, on the books that we or the trustee or other agent maintain for this purpose, as the “holders” of those securities. These persons are the legal holders of the securities. We refer to those who, indirectly through others, own beneficial interests in securities that are not registered in their own names as indirect owners of those securities. As we discuss below, indirect owners are not legal holders, and investors in securities issued in book-entry form or in street name will be indirect owners.

Book-Entry Owners

We expect to issue debt securities, preferred shares and depositary shares in book-entry form only. We may also issue common shares in book-entry form, as well. This means those securities will be represented by one or more global securities registered in the name of a financial institution that holds them as depositary on behalf of other financial institutions that participate in the depositary's book-entry system. These participating institutions, in turn, hold beneficial interests in the securities on behalf of themselves or their customers.

Under each indenture or other applicable agreement, only the person in whose name a security is registered is recognized as the holder of that security. Consequently, for securities issued in global form, we will recognize only the depositary as the holder of the securities and we will make all payments on the securities, including deliveries of common or preferred shares in exchange for exchangeable debt securities, to the depositary. The depositary passes along the payments it receives to its participants, which in turn pass the payments along to their customers who are the beneficial owners. The depositary and its participants do so under agreements they have made with one another or with their customers; they are not obligated to do so under the terms of the securities.

As a result, investors will not own securities directly. Instead, they will own beneficial interests in a global security, through a bank, broker or other financial institution that participates in the depositary's book-entry system or holds an interest through a participant. As long as the securities are issued in global form, investors will be indirect owners, and not holders, of the securities.

Street Name Owners

In the future we may terminate a global security or issue securities initially in non-global form. In these cases, investors may choose to hold their securities in their own names or in street name. Securities held by an investor in street name would be registered in the name of a bank, broker or other financial institution that the investor chooses, and the investor would hold only a beneficial interest in those securities through an account he or she maintains at that institution.

For securities held in street name, we will recognize only the intermediary banks, brokers and other financial institutions in whose names the securities are registered as the holders of those securities and we will make all payments on those securities, including deliveries of common or preferred shares in exchange for exchangeable debt securities, to them. These institutions pass along the payments they receive to their customers who are the beneficial owners, but only because they agree to do so in their customer agreements or because they are legally required to do so. Investors who hold securities in street name will be indirect owners, not holders, of those securities.

Legal Holders

Our obligations, as well as the obligations of the trustee under either indenture and the obligations, if any, of any other third parties employed by us, the trustee or any agents, run only to the holders of the securities. We do not have obligations to investors who hold beneficial interests in global securities, in street name or by any other indirect means. This will be the case whether an investor chooses to be an indirect owner of a security or has no choice because we are issuing the securities only in global form.

For example, once we make a payment or give a notice to the holder, we have no further responsibility for that payment or notice even if that holder is required, under agreements with depository participants or customers or by law, to pass it along to the indirect owners but does not do so. Similarly, if we want to obtain the approval of the holders for any purpose—e.g., to amend the indenture for a series of debt securities or to relieve us of the consequences of a default or of our obligation to comply with a particular provision of an indenture—we would seek the approval only from the holders, and not the indirect owners, of the relevant securities. Whether and how the holders contact the indirect owners is up to the holders.

When we refer to “you” in this section of the prospectus, we mean those who invest in the securities being offered by this prospectus, whether they are the holders or only indirect owners of those securities. When we refer to “your securities” in this section of the prospectus, we mean the securities in which you will hold a direct or indirect interest.

Special Considerations for Indirect Owners

If you hold securities through a bank, broker or other financial institution, either in book-entry form or in street name, you should check with your own institution to find out:

- how it handles securities payments and notices;
- whether it imposes fees or charges;
- how it would handle a request for the holder's consent, if ever required;
- whether and how you can instruct it to send you securities registered in your own name so you can be a holder, if that is permitted in the future;
- how it would exercise rights under the securities if there were a default or other event triggering the need for holders to act to protect their interests; and
 - if the securities are in book-entry form, how the depository's rules and procedures will affect these matters.

What Is a Global Security?

A global security is issued in book-entry form only. Each security issued in book-entry form will be represented by a global security that we deposit with and register in the name of one or more financial institutions or clearing systems, or their nominees, which we select. A financial institution or clearing system that we select for any security for this purpose is called the “depository” for that security. A security will usually have only one depository but it may have more.

Each series of these securities will have one or more of the following as the depositories:

- The Depository Trust Company, New York, New York, which is known as “DTC”;
- a financial institution holding the securities on behalf of Euroclear Bank S.A./N.V., as operator of the Euroclear system, which is known as “Euroclear”;

- a financial institution holding the securities on behalf of Clearstream Banking, société anonyme, Luxembourg, which is known as “Clearstream”; and
 - any other clearing system or financial institution named in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The depositaries named above may also be participants in one another's systems. Thus, for example, if DTC is the depositary for a global security, investors may hold beneficial interests in that security through Euroclear or Clearstream, as DTC participants. The depositary or depositaries for your securities will be named in your prospectus supplement; if none is named, the depositary will be DTC.

A global security may represent one or any other number of individual securities. Generally, all securities represented by the same global security will have the same terms. We may, however, issue a global security that represents multiple securities of the same kind, such as debt securities, that have different terms and are issued at different times. We call this kind of global security a master global security. Your prospectus supplement will indicate whether your securities are represented by a master global security.

A global security may not be transferred to or registered in the name of anyone other than the depositary or its nominee, unless special termination situations arise. We describe those situations below under “—Holder's Option to Obtain a Non-Global Security; Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated”. As a result of these arrangements, the depositary, or its nominee, will be the sole registered owner and holder of all securities represented by a global security, and investors will be permitted to own only indirect interests in a global security. Indirect interests must be held by means of an account with a broker, bank or other financial institution that in turn has an account with the depositary or with another institution that does. Thus, an investor whose security is represented by a global security will not be a holder of the security, but only an indirect owner of an interest in the global security.

If the prospectus supplement for a particular security indicates that the security will be issued in global form only, then the security will be represented by a global security at all times unless and until the global security is terminated. We describe the situations in which this can occur below under “—Holder's Option to Obtain a Non-Global Security; Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated”. If termination occurs, we may issue the securities through another book-entry clearing system or decide that the securities may no longer be held through any book-entry clearing system.

Special Considerations for Global Securities

As an indirect owner, an investor's rights relating to a global security will be governed by the account rules of the depositary and those of the investor's financial institution or other intermediary through which it holds its interest (e.g., Euroclear or Clearstream, if DTC is the depositary), as well as general laws relating to securities transfers. We do not recognize this type of investor or any intermediary as a holder of securities and instead deal only with the depositary that holds the global security.

If securities are issued only in the form of a global security, an investor should be aware of the following:

- An investor cannot cause the securities to be registered in his or her own name, and cannot obtain non-global certificates for his or her interest in the securities, except in the special situations we describe below;

- An investor will be an indirect holder and must look to his or her own bank or broker for payments on the securities and protection of his or her legal rights relating to the securities, as we describe above under “—Who Is the Legal Owner of a Registered Security?”;
- An investor may not be able to sell interests in the securities to some insurance companies and other institutions that are required by law to own their securities in non-book-entry form;
- An investor may not be able to pledge his or her interest in a global security in circumstances where certificates representing the securities must be delivered to the lender or other beneficiary of the pledge in order for the pledge to be effective;
- The depository's policies will govern payments, deliveries, transfers, exchanges, notices and other matters relating to an investor's interest in a global security, and those policies may change from time to time. We, the trustee and any agents will have no responsibility for any aspect of the depository's policies, actions or records of ownership interests in a global security. We, the trustee and any agents also do not supervise the depository in any way;
- The depository will require that those who purchase and sell interests in a global security within its book-entry system use immediately available funds and your broker or bank may require you to do so as well; and
- Financial institutions that participate in the depository's book-entry system and through which an investor holds its interest in the global securities, directly or indirectly, may also have their own policies affecting payments, deliveries, transfers, exchanges, notices and other matters relating to the securities, and those policies may change from time to time. For example, if you hold an interest in a global security through Euroclear or Clearstream, when DTC is the depository, Euroclear or Clearstream, as applicable, will require those who purchase and sell interests in that security through them to use immediately available funds and comply with other policies and procedures, including deadlines for giving instructions as to transactions that are to be effected on a particular day. There may be more than one financial intermediary in the chain of ownership for an investor. We do not monitor and are not responsible for the policies or actions or records of ownership interests of any of those intermediaries.

Holder's Option to Obtain a Non-Global Security; Special Situations When a Global Security Will Be Terminated

If we issue any series of securities in book-entry form but we choose to give the beneficial owners of that series the right to obtain non-global securities, any beneficial owner entitled to obtain non-global securities may do so by following the applicable procedures of the depository, any transfer agent or registrar for that series and that owner's bank, broker or other financial institution through which that owner holds its beneficial interest in the securities. For example, in the case of a global security representing preferred shares or depository shares, a beneficial owner will be entitled to obtain a non-global security representing its interest by making a written request to the transfer agent or other agent designated by us. If you are entitled to request a non-global certificate and wish to do so, you will need to allow sufficient lead time to enable us or our agent to prepare the requested certificate.

In addition, in a few special situations described below, a global security will be terminated and interests in it will be exchanged for certificates in non-global form representing the securities it represented. After that exchange, the choice of whether to hold the securities directly or in street name will be up to the investor. Investors must consult their own banks or brokers to find out how to have their interests in a global security transferred on termination to their own names, so that they will be holders. We have described the rights of holders and street name investors above under “—Who Is the Legal Owner of a Registered Security?”

The special situations for termination of a global security are as follows:

- if the depository notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as depository for that global security or the depository has ceased to be a clearing agency registered under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and in either case we do not appoint another institution to act as depository within 90 days;
- in the case of a global security representing debt securities, if an event of default has occurred with regard to the debt securities and has not been cured or waived; or
 - any other circumstances specified for this purpose in the applicable prospectus supplement.

If a global security is terminated, only the depository, and not we or the trustee for any debt securities, is responsible for deciding the names of the institutions in whose names the securities represented by the global security will be registered and, therefore, who will be the holders of those securities.

Considerations Relating to Euroclear and Clearstream

Euroclear and Clearstream are securities clearance systems in Europe. Both systems clear and settle securities transactions between their participants through electronic, book-entry delivery of securities against payment.

Euroclear and Clearstream may be depositaries for a global security. In addition, if DTC is the depository for a global security, Euroclear and Clearstream may hold interests in the global security as participants in DTC.

As long as any global security is held by Euroclear or Clearstream, as depository, you may hold an interest in the global security only through an organization that participates, directly or indirectly, in Euroclear or Clearstream. If Euroclear or Clearstream is the depository for a global security and there is no depository in the United States, you will not be able to hold interests in that global security through any securities clearance system in the United States.

Payments, deliveries, transfers, exchanges, notices and other matters relating to the securities made through Euroclear or Clearstream must comply with the rules and procedures of those systems. Those systems could change their rules and procedures at any time. We have no control over those systems or their participants and we take no responsibility for their activities. Transactions between participants in Euroclear or Clearstream, on one hand, and participants in DTC, on the other hand, when DTC is the depository, would also be subject to DTC's rules and procedures.

Special Timing Considerations for Transactions in Euroclear and Clearstream

Investors will be able to make and receive through Euroclear and Clearstream payments, deliveries, transfers, exchanges, notices and other transactions involving any securities held through those systems only on days when those systems are open for business. Those systems may not be open for business on days when banks, brokers and other institutions are open for business in the United States.

In addition, because of time-zone differences, U.S. investors who hold their interests in the securities through these systems and wish to transfer their interests, or to receive or make a payment or delivery or exercise any other right with respect to their interests, on a particular day may find that the transaction will not be effected until the next business day in Luxembourg or Brussels, as applicable. Thus, investors who wish to exercise rights that expire on a particular day may need to act before the expiration date. In addition, investors who hold their interests through both DTC and Euroclear or Clearstream may need to make special arrangements to finance any purchases or sales of their interests between the U.S. and European clearing systems, and those transactions may settle later than would be the

case for transactions within one clearing system.

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PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities offered by this prospectus from time to time in one or more transactions, including without limitation:

- directly to purchasers;
- through agents;
- to or through underwriters or dealers; or
- through a combination of these methods.

A distribution of the securities offered by this prospectus may also be effected through the issuance of derivative securities, including without limitation, warrants, exchangeable securities, forward delivery contracts and the writing of options.

In addition, the manner in which we may sell some or all of the securities covered by this prospectus includes, without limitation, through:

- a block trade in which a broker–dealer will attempt to sell as agent, but may position or resell a portion of the block, as principal, in order to facilitate the transaction;
- purchases by a broker–dealer, as principal, and resale by the broker–dealer for its account;
- ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which a broker solicits purchasers; or
- privately negotiated transactions.

We may also enter into hedging transactions. For example, we may:

- enter into transactions with a broker–dealer or affiliate thereof in connection with which such broker–dealer or affiliate will engage in short sales of securities pursuant to this prospectus, in which case such broker–dealer or affiliate may use common stock received from us to close out its short positions;
 - sell securities short and redeliver such securities to close out our short positions;
- enter into option or other types of transactions that require us to deliver common stock to a broker–dealer or an affiliate thereof, who will then resell or transfer the common stock under this prospectus; or

- loan or pledge the common stock to a broker–dealer or an affiliate thereof, who may sell the loaned shares or, in an event of default in the case of a pledge, sell the pledged shares pursuant to this prospectus.

In addition, we may enter into derivative or hedging transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. In connection with such a transaction, the third parties may sell securities covered by and pursuant to this prospectus and an applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be. If so, the third party may use securities borrowed from us or others to settle such sales and may use securities received from us to close out any related short positions. We may also loan or pledge securities covered by this prospectus and an applicable prospectus supplement to third parties, who may sell the loaned securities or, in an event of default in the case of a pledge, sell the pledged securities pursuant to this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be.

A prospectus supplement with respect to each series of securities will state the terms of the offering of the securities, including:

- the name or names of any underwriters or agents and the amounts of securities underwritten or purchased by each of them, if any;
- the public offering price or purchase price of the securities and the net proceeds to be received by us from the sale;
 - any delayed delivery arrangements;
- any underwriting discounts or agency fees and other items constituting underwriters' or agents' compensation;
 - any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers; and
 - any securities exchange on which the securities may be listed.

The offer and sale of the securities described in this prospectus by us, the underwriters, or the third parties described above may be effected from time to time in one or more transactions, including privately negotiated transactions, either:

- at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;
- at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;
- at prices related to the prevailing market prices; or
 - at negotiated prices.

General

Any public offering price and any discounts, commissions, concessions or other items constituting compensation allowed or reallocated or paid to underwriters, dealers, agents or remarketing firms may be changed from time to time. Underwriters, dealers, agents and remarketing firms that participate in the distribution of the offered securities may be "underwriters" as defined in the Securities Act. Any discounts or commissions they receive from us and any profits they receive on the resale of the offered securities may be treated as underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. We will identify any underwriters, agents or dealers and describe their commissions, fees or discounts in the applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be.

At-the-Market Offerings

If we reach an agreement with an underwriter on a placement, including the number of shares of common stock to be offered in the placement and any minimum price below which sales may not be made, such underwriter would agree to use its commercially reasonable efforts, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices, to try to sell such shares on such terms. Underwriters could make sales in privately negotiated transactions and/or any other method permitted by law, including sales deemed to be an “at-the-market” offering as defined in Rule 415 promulgated under the Securities Act, sales made directly on the NYSE, the existing trading market for our common stock, or sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange. The name of any such underwriter or agent involved in the offer and sale of our common stock, the amounts underwritten, and the nature of its obligations to take our common stock will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters and Agents

If underwriters are used in a sale, they will acquire the offered securities for their own account. The underwriters may resell the offered securities in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions. These sales may be made at a fixed public offering price or prices, which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of the sale, at prices related to such prevailing market price or at negotiated prices. We may offer the securities to the public through an underwriting syndicate or through a single underwriter. The underwriters in any particular offering will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be.

Unless otherwise specified in connection with any particular offering of securities, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the offered securities will be subject to certain conditions contained in an underwriting agreement that we will enter into with the underwriters at the time of the sale to them. The underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the securities of the series offered if any of the securities are purchased, unless otherwise specified in connection with any particular offering of securities. Any initial offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed, reallocated or paid to dealers may be changed from time to time.

We may designate agents to sell the offered securities. Unless otherwise specified in connection with any particular offering of securities, the agents will agree to use their best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of their appointment. We may also sell the offered securities to one or more remarketing firms, acting as principals for their own accounts or as agents for us. These firms will remarket the offered securities upon purchasing them in accordance with a redemption or repayment pursuant to the terms of the offered securities. A prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be, will identify any remarketing firm and will describe the terms of its agreement, if any, with us and its compensation.

In connection with offerings made through underwriters or agents, we may enter into agreements with such underwriters or agents pursuant to which we receive our outstanding securities in consideration for the securities being offered to the public for cash. In connection with these arrangements, the underwriters or agents may also sell securities covered by this prospectus to hedge their positions in these outstanding securities, including in short sale transactions. If so, the underwriters or agents may use the securities received from us under these arrangements to close out any related open borrowings of securities.

Dealers

We may sell the offered securities to dealers as principals. We may negotiate and pay dealers' commissions, discounts or concessions for their services. The dealer may then resell such securities to the public either at varying prices to be determined by the dealer or at a fixed offering price agreed to with us at the time of resale. Dealers engaged by us may allow other dealers to participate in resales.

Direct Sales

We may choose to sell the offered securities directly. In this case, no underwriters or agents would be involved.

Institutional Purchasers

We may authorize agents, dealers or underwriters to solicit certain institutional investors to purchase offered securities on a delayed delivery basis pursuant to delayed delivery contracts providing for payment and delivery on a specified future date. The applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be will provide the details of any such arrangement, including the offering price and commissions payable on the solicitations.

We will enter into such delayed contracts only with institutional purchasers that we approve. These institutions may include commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies and educational and charitable institutions.

Indemnification; Other Relationships

We may have agreements with agents, underwriters, dealers and remarketing firms to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act. Agents, underwriters, dealers and remarketing firms, and their affiliates, may engage in transactions with, or perform services for, us in the ordinary course of business. This includes commercial banking and investment banking transactions.

Market Making, Stabilization and Other Transactions

There is currently no market for any of the offered securities other than the shares of common stock, which are listed on the NYSE. If the offered securities are traded after their initial issuance, they may trade at a discount from their initial offering price, depending upon prevailing interest rates, the market for similar securities and other factors. While it is possible that an underwriter could inform us that it intended to make a market in the offered securities, such underwriter would not be obligated to do so, and any such market making could be discontinued at any time without notice. Therefore, no assurance can be given as to whether an active trading market will develop for the offered securities. We have no current plans for listing of the offered securities (other than the common stock) on any securities exchange; any such listing with respect to any particular securities will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be.

In connection with any offering of common stock, the underwriters may purchase and sell common stock in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, syndicate covering transactions and stabilizing transactions. Short sales involve syndicate sales of common stock in excess of the number of shares to be purchased by the underwriters in the offering, which creates a syndicate short position. "Covered" short sales are sales of shares made in an amount up to the number of shares represented by the underwriters' over-allotment option. In determining the source of shares to close out the covered syndicate short position, the underwriters will consider, among other things, the price of shares available for purchase in the open market as compared to the price at which they may purchase shares through the over-allotment option. Transactions to close out the covered syndicate short involve either purchases of the common stock in the open market after the distribution has been completed or the exercise of the over-allotment option. The underwriters may also make "naked" short sales of shares in excess of the over-allotment option. The underwriters must close out any naked short position by purchasing common stock in the open market. A naked short position is more likely to be created if the underwriters are concerned that there may be downward pressure on the price of the shares in the open market after pricing that could adversely affect investors who purchase in the offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of bids for or purchases of shares in the open market while the offering is in progress for the purpose of pegging, fixing or maintaining the price of the securities.

In connection with any offering, the underwriters may also engage in penalty bids. Penalty bids permit the underwriters to reclaim a selling concession from a syndicate member when the securities originally sold by the syndicate member are purchased in a syndicate covering transaction to cover syndicate short positions. Stabilizing transactions, syndicate covering transactions and penalty bids may cause the price of the securities to be higher than it would be in the absence of the transactions. The underwriters may, if they commence these transactions, discontinue them at any time.

Fees and Commissions

In compliance with the guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, the aggregate maximum discount, commission or agency fees or other items constituting underwriting compensation to be received by any FINRA member or independent broker-dealer will not exceed 8% of any offering pursuant to this prospectus and any applicable prospectus supplement or pricing supplement, as the case may be; however, it is anticipated that the maximum commission or discount to be received in any particular offering of securities will be significantly less than this amount.

VALIDITY OF SECURITIES

In connection with particular offerings of securities in the future, the legal validity of the securities may be passed upon for us by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, New York, New York, counsel to WellCare Health Plans, Inc. The validity of any securities issued under this prospectus will be passed upon for any underwriters, dealers or agents by counsel named in the applicable prospectus supplement.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements, the related financial statement schedules incorporated into this prospectus by reference from the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011 and the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting, have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such financial statements and financial statement schedules have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in auditing and accounting.

PART II

INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

The following table sets forth the fees and expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of the securities being registered. All amounts are estimates.

SEC registration fee	(1)(2)
NASD filing fee	\$ (2)
Accounting fees and expenses	(2)
Legal fees and expenses	(2)
Rating Agency Fees	(2)
Printing expenses	(2)
Transfer agent, Depository and registrar fees and expenses	(2)
Miscellaneous expenses	(2)
Total	\$ (2)

- (1) Under SEC Rule 456(b) and 457(r), the SEC registration fee will be paid at the time of any particular offering of securities under this registration statement, and is therefore not currently determinable.
- (2) The amount of these expenses is not currently known.

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers

Section 145 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, or DGCL, provides, in effect, that any person made a party to any action by reason of the fact that he or she is or was our director, officer, associate or agent may and, in certain cases, must be indemnified by us against, in the case of a non-derivative action, judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by such person as a result of such action, and in the case of a derivative action, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), if in either type of action he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to our best interests. This indemnification does not apply, in a derivative action, to matters as to which it is adjudged that the director, officer, associate or agent is liable to us, unless upon court order it is determined that, despite such adjudication of liability, but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for expenses, and, in a non-derivative action, to any criminal proceeding in which such person had reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Article 6 of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation provides that no director shall be liable to us or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director to the fullest extent permitted by the DGCL.

Article 7 of our amended and restated certificate of incorporation also provides that we shall indemnify to the fullest extent permitted by Delaware law any and all of its directors and officers, or former directors and officers, or any person who may have served at our request as a director or officer of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise.

We have entered into indemnification agreements with each director and certain of our officers. Pursuant to such agreements, we will be obligated, to the extent permitted by applicable law, to indemnify such directors and officers

against all expenses, judgments, fines and penalties incurred in connection with the defense or settlement of any actions brought against them by reason of the fact that they were our directors or officers or assumed certain responsibilities at our direction. We have also purchased directors and officers liability insurance in order to limit our exposure to liability for indemnification of directors and officers.

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Any underwriting agreements that we may enter into will likely provide for the indemnification of us, our controlling persons, our directors and certain of our officers by the underwriters against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

Item 16. Exhibits

Exhibit Number	Description
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement relating to common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, securities purchase contracts, units and debt securities*
3.1	Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on August 13, 2004 (No. 001-32209))
3.2	Amendment to Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on November 4, 2009 (No. 001-32209))
3.3	Third Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 8-K filed by the Company on November 2, 2010 (No. 001-32209))
4.1	Specimen of the Company's Common Stock Certificate (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on November 4, 2010 (No. 001-32209))
4.2	Form of Certificate of Designation relating to preferred stock*
4.3	Form of Deposit Agreement, including the form of depositary receipt*
4.4	Form of Warrant Agreement, including the form of Warrant Certificate*
4.5	Form of Securities Purchase Contract*
4.6	Form of Unit Agreement*
4.7	Form of Senior Debt Indenture
4.8	Form of Senior Debt Security (included in Exhibit 4.7)
4.9	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture
4.10	Form of Subordinated Debt Security (included in Exhibit 4.9)
5.1	Opinion of Sullivan & Cromwell L.L.P.
12.1	Statement regarding computation of ratio of earnings to fixed charges.
12.2	Statement regarding computation of ratio of combined fixed charges and preference dividends to earnings.*
23.1	Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP
23.2	Consent of Sullivan & Cromwell L.L.P. (included in their opinion filed as Exhibit 5.1)
24.1	Powers of Attorney (included on signature page)
25.1	Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as

25.2 trustee under the Senior Debt Indenture.
Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as trustee under the Subordinated Debt Indenture.

* To be filed, if necessary, as an exhibit to a post-effective amendment to this registration statement or as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.

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Item 17. Undertakings

(a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:
 - (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;
 - (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement;
 - (iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

Provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i), (a)(1)(ii) and (a)(1)(iii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

- (2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.
- (3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.
- (4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser:
 - (A) Each prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(B)

Each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5) or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii) or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which the prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

(5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the registrant under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, the undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

- (i) Any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;
- (ii) Any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned registrant;
- (iii) The portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant; and
- (iv) Any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

(b) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the city of Tampa, State of Florida, on August 6, 2012.

WellCare Health Plans, Inc.

By: /s/ Alec Cunningham
 Alec Cunningham
 Chief Executive Officer

POWER OF ATTORNEY

KNOWN ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Alec Cunningham and Lisa G. Iglesias or either of them acting alone, his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact and agent, with full power of substitution and revocation, for him or her and in his or her name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign (i) any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this registration statement and to file the same with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith and (ii) any registration statement and any and all amendments thereto, relating to the offer covered hereby filed pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act of 1933, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorney-in-fact and agents, full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and necessary to be done as fully to all intents and purposes as he or she might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents, or his or their substitute or substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed below by the following persons on the date and in the capacity indicated:

Signature	Title	Date
/s/ Alec Cunningham Alec Cunningham	Chief Executive Officer and Director (Principal Executive Officer)	August 6, 2012
/s/ Thomas L. Tran Thomas L. Tran	Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer)	August 6, 2012
/s/ Maurice S. Hebert Maurice S. Hebert	Chief Accounting Officer (Principal Accounting Officer)	August 6, 2012
/s/ Charles G. Berg Charles G. Berg	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ Carol J. Burt Carol J. Burt	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ David J. Gallitano David J. Gallitano	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ D. Robert Graham D. Robert Graham	Director	August 1, 2012
/s/ Kevin F. Hickey Kevin F. Hickey	Director	August 6, 2012

Signature	Title	Date
/s/ Christian P. Michalik Christian P. Michalik	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ Glenn D. Steele, Jr. Glenn D. Steele, Jr.	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ William L. Trubeck William L. Trubeck	Director	August 6, 2012
/s/ Paul E. Weaver Paul E. Weaver	Director	August 6, 2012

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit Number	Description
1.1	Form of Underwriting Agreement relating to common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, warrants, securities purchase contracts, units and debt securities*
3.1	Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on August 13, 2004 (No. 001-32209))
3.2	Amendment to Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on November 4, 2009 (No. 001-32209))
3.3	Third Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 8-K filed by the Company on November 2, 2010 (No. 001-32209))
4.1	Specimen of the Company's Common Stock Certificate (incorporated herein by reference to the Company's Form 10-Q filed by the Company on November 4, 2010 (No. 001-32209))
4.2	Form of Certificate of Designation relating to preferred stock*
4.3	Form of Deposit Agreement, including the form of depositary receipt*
4.4	Form of Warrant Agreement, including the form of Warrant Certificate*
4.5	Form of Securities Purchase Contract*
4.6	Form of Unit Agreement*
4.7	Form of Senior Debt Indenture
4.8	Form of Senior Debt Security (included in Exhibit 4.7)
4.9	Form of Subordinated Debt Indenture
4.10	Form of Subordinated Debt Security (included in Exhibit 4.9)
5.1	Opinion of Sullivan & Cromwell L.L.P.
12.1	Statement regarding computation of ratio of earnings to fixed charges.
12.2	Statement regarding computation of ratio of combined fixed charges and preference dividends to earnings.*
23.1	Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP
23.2	Consent of Sullivan & Cromwell L.L.P. (included in their opinion filed as Exhibit 5.1)
24.1	Powers of Attorney (included on signature page)
25.1	Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as trustee under the Senior Debt Indenture.
25.2	Statement of Eligibility under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A. as trustee under the Subordinated Debt Indenture.

*To be filed, if necessary, as an exhibit to a post-effective amendment to this registration statement or as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K and incorporated herein by reference.

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