

## Aetna confirms losing Microsoft as customer

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NEW YORK (Dow Jones/AP) — Aetna Inc. said it lost Microsoft Corp., one of its biggest clients, to a rival health insurer.

The news could be a potential blow to Aetna, a beleaguered health insurer that is just starting to show signs of a comeback this year. Microsoft is just the type of client name that sales people like to tout as they go about signing up customers.

But the loss could also represent the highest-profile example yet of Aetna's willingness to lose business if it's not profitable. None of the companies involved disclosed financial terms and it isn't known whether the Microsoft business was profitable for Aetna.

Aetna has made a concerted effort to shrink itself into profitability over the past year.

Two years ago, the company was the largest health insurer in the nation with more than 20 million members. Today, Aetna serves just over 14 million people, having slipped to the second-largest position after UnitedHealth Group Inc.

Aetna has said it has been working diligently to rid itself of clients whose health and administrative costs outstrip the premiums and fees that Aetna collects.

So far this year, the company has posted two consecutive profitable quarters.

The winner of the Microsoft contract is a small, regional health plan called Premera Blue Cross that is based in the Pacific Northwest, close to Microsoft headquarters. p