



April 3, 2014

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am writing on behalf of the Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania, a group of private hospitals that serve especially large numbers of low-income, Medicaid-covered, and uninsured patients, to express our support for our state's Healthy Pennsylvania section 1115 Medicaid waiver application.

The primary objectives of Healthy Pennsylvania are to extend essential health benefits to more than 500,000 additional low-income Pennsylvanians and to enhance access to quality health care services in the commonwealth. We believe Healthy Pennsylvania does both in an effective, productive manner that will enable safety-net hospitals and others to do more than ever to serve their communities.

Safety-net hospitals have long fulfilled a special role in Pennsylvania's broader health care safety net, and Healthy Pennsylvania would enable us to extend that role. Even though more people would have health insurance and access to care under the program, we believe safety-net hospitals will continue to face distinct and often costly challenges from patients with long-term, chronic medical problems who have had only sporadic contact with the health care system over the years; from patients whose long-term behavioral health problems complicate providers' efforts to address their medical and behavioral health needs; from patients whose limited financial means make it difficult for them to live healthy lives and recover from illnesses and injuries; and from patients who face other obstacles to receiving care, such as homelessness, child care needs, transportation challenges, language barriers, and more.

For these reasons, we are especially heartened to see that Pennsylvania's waiver application includes the proposed Healthy Pennsylvania Safety Net Pool (HPA-SNP), which would include an Uncompensated Care Pool and/or a Delivery System Reform Incentive Pool; our organization encouraged the state to add this to its waiver application when the original draft included no such provision. We did so because, as safety-net hospitals, we recognize that health care benefits are of little value without genuine access to health care services. We also did so because we understand, more than most, that despite the extension of medical benefits to hundreds of thousands of additional Pennsylvanians, private safety-net hospitals (in a state with no public hospitals) will continue to encounter special challenges that will require additional public resources to address. We believe the resources from the HPA-SNP will help with that effort.

We recognize that the details of how the HPA-SNP will work have not yet been formulated and look forward to working with state officials on the development of these programs in the near future. For this reason, we urge you to approve the inclusion of the HPA-SNP in the final waiver to ensure that Healthy Pennsylvania, in conjunction with the commonwealth's State Innovation Plan, achieves its objective of helping safety-net providers meet the medical needs of the medically neediest Pennsylvanians.



Again, the Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania urges you to approve the state's application for a section 1115 Medicaid waiver. We appreciate your consideration of our views and welcome any questions you may have about the Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania and our perspective on the state's Medicaid waiver application.

Sincerely,

Michael Chirieleison
President

cc. Marilyn Tavenner, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

