

Partnership for Medicaid Partnership for Medicaid

July 23, 2013

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

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

The Partnership for Medicaid – a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition of safety-net providers, counties, and health plans – writes to request a meeting with you or your staff to discuss the Administration’s public education materials on the ACA and the public messages regarding the Medicaid expansion. We share your goal of maximizing enrollment in health insurance and Medicaid plays a major role in getting people covered. While we understand that setting up the state Marketplaces is a new endeavor and there have been a number of unanticipated challenges, we are concerned that Medicaid and the Medicaid expansion have been downplayed as a key element of the ACA’s insurance expansions; indeed, the CBO anticipates more people will sign up for Medicaid in 2014 than in subsidized Marketplace plans. **We invite you to join a conversation with our membership so we can mutually discuss how best to promote the Medicaid expansion and to discuss how best to inform low-income individuals in non-Medicaid expansion states about their options.**

The Department has issued a number of ACA educational materials such as PowerPoint trainings, fact sheets, and other flyers advertising the changes coming as a result of the law. Many of these materials are tailored to specific audiences, such as health care providers, women, African-Americans, and Hispanics. These materials are comprehensive when outlining the new provisions associated with private insurance (new consumer protections, financial assistance, etc.), but the sections entitled “expanded options for getting coverage” do not mention the Medicaid expansion to non-disabled adults earning at or below 133% FPL. We believe a straightforward discussion of Medicaid coverage options should be a central part of your communications and messaging plans, in both written materials and in official talking points.

We are also concerned about how the enrollment campaign and Administration public statements have been promoting new coverage options for “all” Americans beginning in October 2013. Not all states have opted to expand Medicaid to this new population yet. We are concerned about the impact of such messaging for those earning below 100% FPL in over half the state, as they will be ineligible for both Medicaid coverage and for financial assistance to make private coverage affordable. Recent estimates find that 7.4 million people will fall into this category. We would like to work with you so that encouraging individuals to apply for coverage will not result in confusion and false hope and will not make future enrollment efforts more difficult. We were pleased to hear earlier this week that Administration officials are planning to incorporate this reality into public messages and written materials, including mentioning that 27 states are leaving millions of people in the lowest income group—often those with the poorest health and greatest health care needs—without health care coverage. As core providers to Medicaid

enrollees and the uninsured, we would like to discuss how we can be of service in explaining coverage and access options to individuals in non-expansion states.

We understand that implementation of the law has many aspects that need to be explained to the public, but Medicaid must be a part of the conversation. The Partnership for Medicaid members are prepared to assist the Administration and discuss how we can achieve mutual goals to ensure a successful enrollment campaign that is inclusive of Medicaid. Please have your staff contact Shawn Gremminger, First Co-Chair of the Partnership for Medicaid, at sgremminger@essentialhospitals.org or at 202-585-0112 to identify an opportunity for this discussion.

Sincerely,

America's Essential Hospitals
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
The Jewish Federations of North America
Medicaid Health Plans of America
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Health Care for the Homeless Council

cc: Marilyn Tavenner, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Cindy Mann, Deputy Administrator / Director, Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services