

Name

Address

City State Zip

Dear Sen. /Rep. LAST NAME,

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has offered the Pennsylvania Primary Care Loan Repayment Program (PA LRP) for the past 25 years. More recently the commonwealth's Department of Health has funded the Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center. During that time, nearly 500 primary care providers have received loan repayment by serving areas of the commonwealth with a primary care, dental or behavioral health professional shortage. In the past three years, the Career Center has placed 39 primary care providers and administrators in underserved communities across the state.

(OPTION 1: Use this one if you do not have a placement or loan repayment recipient) According to Rural Health Works (<http://ruralhealthworks.org/>), every physician hired adds 26 good jobs with benefits and \$1.39 million in payroll to a community. Dentists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants also have a significant impact on jobs and payroll. Since 2013 alone, the PA LRP has resulted in 1,548 new jobs and \$91,272,328 million in payroll. This does not factor in the many goods and services purchased locally as the result of this increase in employment and payroll.

(OPTION 2: Use this one if you do have a placement or loan repayment recipient) The NAME OF YOUR FACILITY has benefited greatly through these programs. We have had # PA LRP recipients who we could not have recruited and retained without the loan repayment. FILL IN ANY DETAILS ABOUT THE RECIPIENTS... SPECIALTY, NUMBER OF PATIENTS THEY SEE, REVENUE GENERATED. The Career Center helped us hire # primary care providers. Without the assistance of the Career Center, it is unlikely we would have successfully recruited these providers, who care for X# patients per year.

I am, however, concerned about the future of these programs and their extremely positive impact. As part of Gov. Wolf's proposal to consolidate four departments (Health, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol, and Aging), the PA LRP and the Career Center would be moved to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). While PHEAA does a wonderful job with financing higher education, they do not have experience in administrating what are essentially healthcare programs.

The Department of Health's Bureau of Health Planning has administrated and developed these programs for a number of years. They are keenly aware of the needs of both providers and the vulnerable populations and communities most in need of PA LRP and Career Center support. Removing these programs from the skilled and practiced hands of the DOH and moving them to the respected yet comparatively inexperienced PHEAA does not seem prudent and wise. It is doubtful that PHEAA will give the program as much time, attention and expertise as currently afforded by the DOH.

Rather than playing budgetary shell games and risking the future of the Pennsylvania Primary Care Loan Repayment Program and the Pennsylvania Primary Care Career Center that safety net providers like us rely on, I believe the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should keep these programs in the Department of Health or the new, consolidated department.

In fact, these programs are successful investments of tax dollars and consideration should be given to expanding rather than moving them.

Sincerely,