



November 18, 2015

The Honorable Tina Pickett
315A Main Capitol Building
P.O. Box 202110
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2110

The Honorable Anthony M. DeLuca
115 Irvis Office Building
PO Box 202032
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2032

Dear Representatives Pickett and DeLuca,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PACHC) and our 50 member organizations, we wish to express our support for your commitment to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Community Health Centers comprise the largest network of primary care providers, with locations in 50 counties of our Commonwealth. These health centers serve as a safety net, as 92 percent of our patients have incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Furthermore, by federal law, our health centers may only be established in communities with significant challenges in access to care.

PACHC's network of nearly 300 Community Health Center sites across Pennsylvania serves more than 700,000 Pennsylvanians annually in underserved rural and urban areas. Nationally, more than 23 million people are served by health centers, proven providers that curb the rising cost of health care in the nation. As providers that offer critical primary medical and dental services to patients with CHIP coverage, we support your legislative efforts to reauthorize the program in House Bill 857 and transition the program to the Department of Human Services (DHS) through House Bill 1633.

While reauthorizing the program beyond 2015 is sensible and beneficial to many Pennsylvania families, we believe that transitioning CHIP to DHS is also important. We believe that DHS is in an excellent position to better administer the program. In PACHC's experience with CHIP, we have found that DHS already provides information technology and other services to CHIP so we anticipate the transition will be smooth. DHS is adept at managing the significant "churn" on and off coverage and we believe this will be an advantage as children move between qualifying for CHIP and Medical Assistance.

We are pleased to hear assurances from both agencies that the transition can occur without disrupting services to families and will ultimately provide the Commonwealth a cost savings. On behalf of PACHC and our provider network, we endorse both bills. If we can provide assistance or information in your efforts, please contact our director of policy and partnership, Jim Willshier, at jim@pachc.org. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheri Rinehart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheri Rinehart
President and CEO