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September 5, 2014

Ms. Cindy Mann  
Director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS)  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Ms. Mann,

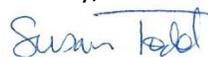
I am writing to express my support for the Greater New Orleans Community Health Connection (GNOCHC) Medicaid 1115 Waiver renewal application. GNOCHC is a critical program for approximately 53,000 adults in our community who are otherwise uninsured. Without this program, the system of community health clinics that provide care to GNOCHC patients would be devastated as our community would experience a significant decrease in access to primary care and behavioral health services for low income residents. As a community, we would be taking steps backwards from the significant progress we have made to build and sustain primary care and behavioral health services. Many of these clinic sites are nationally recognized for meeting high-quality standards and all of them are early adopters of technology using electronic medical records.

This is a vital program that provides desperately needed services throughout the Greater New Orleans area to vulnerable patients who would otherwise not have access to care. Without the covered services provided through these clinics, it would be difficult for patients to manage their chronic conditions such as diabetes. Instead of working with a primary care provider to appropriately manage their illness, they would have few options other than being treated in an emergency room when their condition becomes uncontrollable. We would be moving from currently providing low-cost, high-quality primary care in the appropriate setting of community health centers to a higher-cost setting, the emergency room.

I am in strong support of the Waiver renewal package the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) submitted to CMS including the proposed change to drop the eligibility requirement that enrollees be uninsured for 6 months. In addition, I applaud DHH's decision to maintain the current reimbursement methodology as well as their efforts to add a dental benefit, improve the inter-pregnancy care component to the Waiver, and maintain the payments to support patient centered medical homes. Building on the success of the Wavier is essential to providing needed services and care to residents in our community.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support for a critical program for residents in the Greater New Orleans region.

Sincerely,



Susan Todd, MPAff.  
Executive Director  
504HealthNet