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HONORABLE JOHN TAVAGLIONE  
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HONORABLE CHUCK WASHINGTON  
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DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA  
MARION ASHLEY

May 7, 2015

Andy Slavitt, Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Room 445-G, Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

**RE: California's Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver**

Dear Mr. Slavitt,

I am writing on behalf of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to encourage your support for California's 2020 Waiver Renewal Proposal. As you know, the existing waiver has been a lifeline—a crucial investment—in preparing our public safety net system for the massive paradigm shift precipitated by the Affordable Care Act. The waiver has allowed Riverside County to successfully launch and sustain more than 70 quality improvement initiatives; programs aimed at reducing hospital acquired infections, improving stroke and sepsis interventions, and expanding population health management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and hypertension. These initiatives continue to save lives and reduce the frequent long-term costs and morbidities associated with chronic and debilitating diseases. Importantly, the current waiver has allowed Riverside County to begin eliminating barriers to healthcare in some of the nation's poorest communities. Clearly, additional investment is needed to complete the vital work that remains.

Today, for example, nearly one in every three of Riverside County's 2.3 million residents relies on Medi-Cal for health coverage. Many of those individuals are served by safety net providers in a sweeping 7,300 square mile county where impoverished rural communities sit below World Health Organization standards for patient access to primary care doctors.

A renewed waiver will allow Riverside County to continue developing advanced primary care models. Integrated care will improve and invigorate the patient experience, lower costs and improve quality and access.

A renewed waiver will allow Riverside County to continue its focus upon the following areas:

1. Continued quality improvement and improved data analytics. Our goal is to advance the Information Technology component of our system by creating clinical informatics that will move our whole system into continuous quality improvement for the purpose of real transformation. Riverside County is in a transition from volume-based care to quality and outcome-driven care. Installing a quality improvement and data analytics component is critical if we are to make making a successful leap into the new generation of integrated and seamless healthcare for all lives at all ages on the continuum of care.
2. Establishing an integrated delivery health system in which whole person care is coordinated between behavioral health, social services, and public health. Riverside County has additionally incorporated its Office on Aging, and multiple academic affiliates into its integrated delivery model. We envision a day not far off where, as an example, we can provide a homeless, 35-year-old pre-diabetic suffering from depression and substance abuse with integrated support to find health, employment, housing and social infrastructure to address life issues. It is well known that the high frequency users from a social and public health perspective are also among the highest utilizers of our emergency departments.
3. Continue developing smarter and more patient-centered care using technologies that promote telephone virtual visits, text messaging platforms for disease and medication management. Riverside County has become a national pioneer in some of these areas and expansion of these programs in a severely underserved region

The next 1115 Medicaid waiver offers California an historic opportunity to test payment and delivery system reforms that can help both the state and federal government achieve success. A renewed waiver is needed in 2015 in order to best leverage California's coverage expansion with significant payment reforms and delivery system improvements that will help patients utilize their coverage in cost-effective, patient-centered settings.

The current "Bridge to Reform" waiver has been critical to the state's early success expanding coverage under the Affordable Care Act. At its peak, Riverside County's Low Income Health Program (LIHP) served more than 37,000 lives, many of whom had lived for years without access to primary medical care and wellness services.

The Bridge to Reform waiver also enabled Riverside County and other public healthcare systems to lead the nation in delivery system transformation, through the country's first of its kind pay-for-performance incentive program, the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program. The DSRIP launched Riverside County Health System on an ambitious journey to transform their systems to more integrated, cost effective and patient-centered.

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For these reasons, Riverside County strongly supports California's proposal to renew the 1115 Medi-Cal waiver, especially:

**1. A Public Safety Net Transformation and Improvement Program that Rewards Continued Improvement, Health and Value**

The current DSRIP has helped our system lay a stable foundation for our delivery system improvement efforts. The next five years are critical to more fully transform our health care system so that we can provide everyone with timely access to high-quality, and effective care.

**2. Public Safety Net System Global Payment for the Remaining Uninsured**

We strongly support the state's proposed Public Safety Net System Global Payment for the Remaining Uninsured, which would reform uncompensated care payments to public health care systems, to support access to more cost effective care for the remaining uninsured. Such a pilot would create incentives for Riverside County redirect funds to lower-cost and more patient-friendly outpatient and primary care settings, and utilize alternate modalities that make health care more convenient for the patient.

**3. Regional Integrated Whole Person Care Pilots**

Regional Integrated Whole Person Care pilots would provide comprehensive services to high-risk Medi-Cal beneficiaries, seeking to support each "whole person" through the integration of physical and behavioral health services, along with robust care coordination with social, housing, vocational training and other services that are critical to comprehensively addressing the needs and care of high-risk patients. It would allow for higher value use of limited resources; contain costs, and coordinate care beyond traditional health services.

**4. A Federal Investment that Supports California's 2020 Vision**

The "Bridge to Reform" waiver was critical in California's efforts to implement the Affordable Care Act. However, much more work is needed to build upon this foundation and ensure that the Affordable Care Act can be sustained for the long-term. We believe that the innovative payment and delivery system reforms mentioned above will help us achieve our vision of becoming truly integrated, cost-effective models of care. Accomplishing this goal will require a renewed investment at the same level, and will allow California's Medi-Cal population the opportunity for improved health, not just coverage.

A renewed waiver with these elements will improve the health care services – and as a result, the overall health – of the Medi-Cal and remaining uninsured populations in California.

Sincerely,



Marion Ashley, Fifth District Supervisor  
Chairman of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors