

# LOUISIANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

4301 Elysian Fields Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70122-3809  
504 355 7651

E-mail: MAssociation2010@hotmail.com



*"Your continued success is our goal"*

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December 21, 2010

Mr. Bruce Greenstein  
Secretary  
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals  
P.O. Box 629  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Dear Secretary Greenstein,

The Louisiana Medical Association and New Orleans Medical Association are writing you in support of two of your recent efforts in Louisiana Medicaid: the CommunityCARE revamp and the Coordinated Care Networks plan. We represent more than 400 Louisiana physicians who have served Medicaid patients since the inception of the program. We are acutely aware of the multiple health care challenges of Medicaid recipients and have worked within this community to address poor health outcomes, while helping to maintain the dignity of these disparate patients. Recognizing the current program should be reformed, we offer our experience and expertise in any effort to increase the program's effectiveness and add important elements of cultural and linguistic enhancement. We believe true partnership and collaboration will improve service to Medicaid recipients while improving utilization and efficiency of government resources.

The legal, clinical and socially-competent expertise provided to our patients through our collective work increases awareness of services provided by Medicaid and improves the efficiency of use of those services—all to improve the benefit of services provided by the State of Louisiana. Why do we believe this? Our communities of providers have long been involved with this patient population and, though Medicaid often time carries a stigma for many, the program can help save lives and improve the quality of life for the individuals and families it covers. We know that when we collaborate and work together, we make significant strides and benefits for Louisiana families and the

doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health care professionals charged with their care.

Already, Medicaid recipients and providers have benefited from your collaborative efforts to find the right balance between the state's health care needs and financial challenges. For example, your department chose to work with the provider community to revamp Medicaid's CommunityCARE program instead of eliminate it. What a way to champion openness, transparency and genuine collaboration—a challenge sometimes difficult to overcome! We applaud your revamp of CommunityCARE as a conduit to a meaningful reform next year and now it is time to look forward.

The Department's proposal to fundamentally transform the Medicaid system—how we deliver care to our poorest residents—shows considerable promise for Louisiana. We certainly do not have a shortage of reasons why we need change. On December 7, the United Health Foundation's "America's Health Rankings" again placed Louisiana at the bottom of overall health care outcomes nationally. We rank 45<sup>th</sup> for the prevalence of diabetes, 11 percent of the adult population. We rank 48th in overall cancer deaths at 220 per 100,000 and 48th for infant mortality at nearly 10 deaths for every 1,000 live births.

Louisiana's low health rankings clearly indicate our residents are not getting the value they need from the Medicaid program. Though this is an inaccurate reflection on the physicians, these rankings would indicate providers are not meeting the professional standard required to improve patient outcomes. However, with our continued focus areas of improved awareness, education and ancillary social and spiritual support and your Coordinated Care Networks we can work together to improve service quality and health outcomes.

We applaud you for traveling across Louisiana over the last three months to obtain Louisiana resident and provider feedback about health care in our state. You and your staff's efforts demonstrate your concern and devotion for our people and improving Medicaid, which affects all Louisiana residents in one way or another. We look forward to future public discourse on Medicaid reform and hope that we can be helpful by increasing consumer awareness across policy, clinical and spiritual settings.

Mr. Greenstein, like you, we believe quality and value should be kept at the forefront of any reforms to the Medicaid program. Your proposed Coordinated Care Networks do that. The National Medical Association, Louisiana Medical Association and New Orleans Medical Association are encouraged and supportive of your plan. Today, more than 40 states have implemented similar initiatives to better manage the care their residents receive. Louisiana cannot be at the bottom anymore. We cannot allow our people to languish in a broken system. We cannot make excuses for having high death rates from disease, poor access and high cost. Some may advocate maintaining the status quo, but we cannot. Too much is at stake for our state and its communities. Louisiana's plan

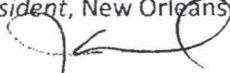
offers our best chance at helping people get the appropriate and meaningful care they need.

Sincerely,

Henry Evans, Jr., M.D.  
*President, Louisiana Medical Association*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry Evans".

Joia Crear-Perry, M.D.  
*President, New Orleans Medical Association*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joia Crear-Perry".

James D. Patterson, M.D.  
*Chairman, Region V, National Medical Association*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James D. Patterson".