

To: Commissioner Michael Considine, Pennsylvania Department of Insurance
Honorable Dominic Pileggi, Senate Majority Leader
Honorable Jay Costa, Senate Minority Leader
Honorable Mike Turzai, House Majority Leader
Honorable Frank Dermody, House Minority Leader
Honorable Nicholas Micozzie, Chair House Insurance Committee
Honorable Anthony Deluca, Vice Chair House Insurance Committee
Honorable Matthew Baker, Chair House Health Committee
Honorable John Meyers, Vice Chair House Health Committee
Honorable Donald White, Chair of Senate Banking and Insurance Committee
Honorable Michael Stack, Vice Chair of Senate Banking and Insurance Committee

Date: September 10, 2012

RE: Request for Public Hearing and Opportunity to Provide Input on Pennsylvania's Essential Health Benefits Package

In light of the recent ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States regarding the Affordable Care Act, (ACA) it is imperative that Pennsylvania recognize the importance of the state's decision regarding Pennsylvania's Essential Benefits (EHB) package. The EHB decision will have a far-reaching impact on Pennsylvania families, individuals, and small businesses for several years. The EHB is one of the most important regulatory tasks required by the ACA and one that warrants an open and transparent decision-making process. The undersigned groups respectfully request and urge the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance as well as the General Assembly hold public hearings regarding the EHB package as soon as possible.

As you know, each state must identify a "benchmark plan" for the individual and small group markets for plans sold both inside and outside of the exchange. It is to be chosen from one of four categories: 1) The largest of one of the three largest small-group products in the state; 2) one of the three largest state employee plans; 3) one of the three largest Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans; or 4) the state's largest non-Medicaid HMO. The selection will serve as a baseline for the development of Pennsylvania's EHB package, and then additional choices will have to be made if necessary to cover all categories of essential benefits listed in the ACA. The deadline for the state to make a decision regarding its EHB package is fast approaching. If Pennsylvania does not actively make a decision, a default option will apply.

To ensure a transparent and accountable process, consumers and providers must have a voice in the selection of the EHB and continue to provide feedback as the process unfolds in Pennsylvania. Opportunities for consumer input and engagement with state officials and other stakeholders should be pursued by the Insurance Department, the General Assembly, and the Governor's office. We therefore urge you to commit to the first step in an active engagement process by holding a public hearing on the Essential Health Benefits Package in Pennsylvania. It

is also imperative that prior to a decision that all plan options be made public so that consumers can provide appropriate feedback

Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact Antoinette Kraus with the Pennsylvania Health Access Network at akraus@pahealthaccess.org or 267-971-1680 or Erin Cusack with Maternity Care Coalition at ecusack@maternitycarecoalition.org or 215-989-3586.

Sincerely,

Adagio Health

Center County Now

Chester County Midwives Alliance of Pennsylvania

Chestnut Ridge Counseling Services

Community Legal Services

Consumer Health Coalition

Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children

Family Health Council of Central Pennsylvania

Health Federation of Philadelphia

Jewish Social Policy Action Network

Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County

Maternal and Family Health Services

Maternity Care Coalition

Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania

Mental Health Association of SEPA

Midwives Alliance of Pennsylvania

National Nursing Centers Consortium

National Physicians Alliance Pennsylvania

New Voices Pennsylvania: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice

PA Perinatal Partnership

Pathway's PA

Penn Action

Pennsylvania Association of Certified Nurse Midwives

Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center

Pennsylvania Health Access Network

Pennsylvania Now

Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society

Pennsylvania Psychological Association

Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association

Pennsylvania Community Providers Association

Pennsylvania Dietetic Association

Philadelphia Coalition

Philadelphia Unemployment Project

Planned Parenthood Advocates Pennsylvania

Public Citizens for Children and Youth

University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

Women's Law Project

Women's Way