



March 20, 2019

RE: Testimony for Assembly Budget Committee Public Hearing – In Support of FY20 Funding for Regional Health Hubs

Presented by: Kimberly M. Birdsall, MPH

Organization: Health Coalition of Passaic County
810 Main Street
Paterson, NJ 07503
Phone: 973 754-4403 | FAX: 973-754-4594
E-mail: birdsalk@sjhmc.org

Good afternoon Chairman and Members of the Assembly Budget Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Health Coalition of Passaic County (HCPC). We offer this testimony in support of State Fiscal Year 2019-2020 funding inclusion for Regional Health Hubs.

The Health Coalition of Passaic County (HCPC) is a collaborative effort of 18 Board members and 50 Community Advisory Board (CAB) members from a wide range of community organizations who share the common aim of improving the health of the underserved in the City of Paterson and the greater Passaic County area. The mission of the HCPC is to create a thriving and sustainable community coalition dedicated to significantly improving the health and overall quality of life for residents of the Greater Passaic County area by specifically addressing social determinants of health. HCPC exists in a capacity aimed at aligning community resources, both clinical and social, to facilitate access for the most vulnerable. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we work in a coordinated effort to address the needs of at-risk populations, improve quality of healthcare, improve health outcomes, reduce waste, and decrease unnecessary costs for the long term health benefit of our residents and the fiscal health of the state of New Jersey.

There has been significant investment to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare in our great State of New Jersey. This investment is meant to improve quality for all NJ residents with a particular focus on service to the Medicaid population. As a result, robust regionally focused coalitions have flourished. The HCPC, in coordination with other New Jersey regional coalitions, applauds New Jersey's support of regional care collaboratives and we are encouraged by the Department of Human Service and the Department of Health's efforts to improve the New Jersey's healthcare system. As you consider the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, we urge you to continue your support of community based healthcare transformation by supporting Regional Health Hubs

We have been working with our partner coalitions Healthy Greater Newark, Trenton Health Team, and the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers as well as NJDOH and NJDHS to finalize the implementation of four coordinated and efficient New Jersey regional population health centers, Regional Health Hubs, which build upon state investments and are key partners in executing priorities of the state as articulated in the Medicaid 1115 Waiver and evaluated in the Medicaid ACO demonstration project.

The healthcare delivery system cannot solve the problems we face on its own. A more regional approach to care – one that involves coordinated, person-centered healthcare in combination with robust connections to



social services and community resources – is required. To address these challenges, regional coalitions dedicated to finding solutions and working through strong community relationships at all levels are essential. State agencies and state-wide Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) need local, nimble partners who can convene stakeholders around tough problems and prepare solutions for scale. To provide better care at lower cost, holistic and preventive care to high need or high cost Medicaid enrollees requires more focus and investment from the State. There are currently four regional health collaboratives in NJ – Healthy Greater Newark, Trenton Health Team, the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, and the Health Coalition of Passaic County – that address the needs of high risk populations through real time data analysis, community convening, and innovative care coordination programs.

The Regional Health Hub Model builds on New Jersey’s already significant investments in public health, including the Medicaid ACO Demonstration Project, DOH’s Faith in Prevention, and coordinated state priority investments in maternal and infant health and the opioid crisis. Private foundations have also provided notable funding to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in the State of New Jersey. The Hub Model builds upon these investments and is envisioned as a holistic entity and key partner in executing the priorities articulated by the state in the Medicaid 1115 Waiver, the DOH DSRIP proposal, and the state’s Healthy NJ 2020 Health Assessment and Improvement plans.

Regional Health Hubs are envisioned as non-profit organizations in New Jersey dedicated to improving healthcare delivery and health outcomes and working in close concert with consumers and stakeholders in the region. We propose that the three certified ACOs (Trenton, Camden and Newark) and one ACO look-alike (HCPC - Paterson) be designated as the first Regional Health Hubs in New Jersey. Since the State’s priorities must respond to the ever-changing needs of its population, the State will be well-served by establishing the Hubs as a reliable mechanism for proactive response to community and state needs. While each Hub will approach this task using the unique strengths of its partners and targeting the specific challenges of its region, there are five core functions of a Regional Health Hub:

1. Operate or utilize a regional Health Information Exchange (HIE).
2. Convene multi-sector partners around the region and facilitate priority initiatives.
3. Facilitate care coordination for high needs populations.
4. Operate as a clinical redesign specialist for providers, payers and the state.
5. Serve as a local expert and conduit for state priorities.

In establishing the Regional Health Hubs, New Jersey should maintain its current fiscal commitment to regional care collaboratives, dividing the existing ACO appropriation of \$3 million (\$1.5 million in state dollars with matching federal funds) among the four proposed Regional Health Hubs. This budget neutral action would establish the Hubs in New Jersey.

Once the Regional Health Hub Model is created and the first four organizations designated, planning can begin to draw down additional federal funding in FY21 and beyond to extend the Hub model to additional communities with high numbers of Medicaid enrollees. The same state dollars, if matched more strategically to federal funding options, can cover a larger network of Hubs in future years.

Regional Health Hubs serve as an important model for advancing Medicaid program priorities in the State of New Jersey.

Regional Health Hubs build upon and leverage the previous state investments in public health, support priorities of the State of New Jersey, and are uniquely positioned within their communities to provide healthcare data infrastructure and analysis, care management and convening of community stakeholders.



These four specific organizations (Trenton Health Team, Camden Coalition, Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition, and Health Coalition of Passaic County) have already been effective in operating HIEs, convening local partners around strategic health goals, and improving care and health outcomes. In recognizing these four Regional Health Hubs, New Jersey will continue this important work and also ensure that limited state resources are spent effectively and efficiently. In addition, the proposed Regional Health Hubs will provide ongoing and strong support for both DHS and DOH in accomplishing their priorities.

Regional Health Hubs provide New Jersey with an opportunity to lead the nation in developing a transparent and accountable model for population health. Now is the time to take the next step and put the Regional Health Hub Model in place with clear goals, functionality, and sustainable funding.