



March 21, 2019

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

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Good afternoon Chairman and Members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Health Coalition of Passaic County (HCPC). We would first like to thank the Governor for including funding for regional health collaboratives in the FY 20 budget. The administration's commitment to funding this work is inspiring.

There has been significant investment to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare in our great State of New Jersey. Thank you to each of you for your previous support and efforts in these investments as they are meant to improve quality for all NJ residents including the most vulnerable and service to the Medicaid population. As a result of these investments, robust regionally focused coalitions have flourished in our state.

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.

The HCPC, in coordination with our partner New Jersey regional coalitions, (Healthy Greater Newark, Trenton Health Team, and the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers), 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 New Jersey's healthcare system.

As you consider and finalize the budget for FY20, our four partner regional coalitions ask for your continued support of community based healthcare transformation through support of the current FY20 budget for regional health collaboratives (Regional Health Hubs) \$3 million (\$1.5 million in state dollars with matching federal funds) allocation. Together we also strongly encourage support of four New Jersey Regional Health Hubs within this allocation. **This support at level funding will enable critical work in service to the Medicaid population to continue while expanding to an additional region of the state without start-up time or costs.**



It is important to note that the **four organizations are each in full support of this recommendation and are already operating in partnership as health care backbone entities in regions throughout New Jersey.** We hope to work with the Legislature, whose past support has made our collaboratives possible, as well as the Administration, to **build upon the work of the ACO Demonstration project in Trenton, Newark and Camden and expand the reach of these regional entities to also include support for The Health Coalition of Passaic County in the FY20 budget.**

These four organizations build upon the already significant state 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. Regional Health Hubs build upon these investments and are envisioned as holistic entities and key partners 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.

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. **The four regional health collaboratives in NJ (proposed Regional Health Hubs) – Health Coalition of Passaic County, Healthy Greater Newark, Trenton Health Team, and the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, - address the needs of high risk populations through real time data analysis, community convening, and innovative care coordination programs.**

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

As noted previously, together we propose that the three certified ACOs (Trenton, Camden and Newark) and one ACO look-alike (HCPC) be designated as the first Regional Health Hubs in New Jersey. These four specific organizations (Health Coalition of Passaic County, Trenton Health Team, Camden Coalition, and Greater Newark Healthcare Coalition) have already been effective in operating HIEs, convening local partners around strategic health goals, and improving care and health outcomes.

Once the Regional Health Hub Model is finalized 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.

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 recognizing the four Regional Health Hubs (Health Coalition of Passaic County, Healthy Greater Newark, Trenton Health Team, and the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers)** New Jersey will continue 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.

New Jersey has 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.

Thank you