



April 6, 2012

Bureau of Program and Reimbursement Analysis
Division of Medical Programs
Healthcare and Family Services
201 South Grand Avenue East
Springfield, Illinois 62763-0002
Submitted via email to: hfs.bpra@illinois.gov

RE: SEIU Joint Comments In Support Of 1115 Waiver Demonstration Project to Cover the Uninsured

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the 1115 Waiver proposal to cover the currently uninsured population that will become eligible for Medicaid, under the ACA, in 2014.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73 represents 1,500 members in the Cook County Health and Hospital System (CCHHS), the Doctors Council SEIU represents 500 attending physicians throughout CCHHS, and SEIU Healthcare Illinois/Indiana represents 5,000 members in hospitals in Cook County.

We are painfully aware of the difficulties facing the health care safety net around the state, and nowhere is the struggle more acute than at CCHHS. The County health system is the third largest provider of uncompensated care in the entire country. CCHHS provides about \$500 million in essential health care services to more than 150,000 uninsured patients every year.

The price tag for the uninsured continues to grow. The weak economy, high unemployment, and employers who can't or don't provide health insurance leaves more and more people with inadequate access to health care. These patients postpone seeing a doctor and getting the treatments they need, making them sicker and more costly to treat. Many in Cook County turn to the CCHHS.

The unsustainable cost of caring for so many uninsured patients is a barrier to investing in the innovative reforms that could help keep populations healthier, coordinate care with other providers, and improve quality for all patients. This waiver proposal is an important step toward addressing the challenging payer mix at CCHHS, expanding access to care, and preparing

CCHHS to lead the way toward a new high performing health care delivery system. We are therefore strongly supportive of the 1115 waiver and of any legislative action needed to expand Medicaid eligibility before 2014.

The 1115 Waiver will benefit patients as well as state and county taxpayers. It provides Medicaid coverage for the 100,000 patients currently already in the CCHHS system. It will have no direct fiscal impact on the state and reduce the amount of subsidy that county taxpayers pay to keep the health system afloat. Shifting the care from costly ER visits to preventative care in medical homes is more cost-effective and will result in better health outcomes for the populations we serve. SEIU Local 73, SEIU HCII, and Doctors Council SEIU enthusiastically support the 1115 Waiver being pursued by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Cook County, and CCHHS.

Sincerely yours,

Christine Boardman
SEIU Local 73

Emilie Junge
Doctors Council SEIU

Keith Kelleher
SEIU HCII