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Written Testimony on SB 1510, HFA #3

Honorable Members of the Executive Committee,

My name is Theresa Eagleson, and, on behalf of the Pritzker administration, I have the great honor and responsibility of leading the Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

I am incredibly proud to support this bill, which will invest in hospitals and communities across our state and begin the transformation of our healthcare system.

As many of you know, we have been talking about this for over two years now, and we would not be here today without the feedback and improvements to this bill from many stakeholders and legislators like Leader Harris, Senator Steans, Senator Syverson, and Leader Demmer of the Medicaid Working Group, as well as so many individual members of the legislature. Because of the time invested and important discussions with the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus, including Representative Lilly, Senator Jones, Representative Greenwood, Representative Robinson, Senator Aquino and Representative Hernandez, this is a better bill and one that will offer a way to design better care and better outcomes in distressed communities across the state, especially communities of color most impacted by Covid-19. Healthcare and Family Services has worked tirelessly with them and a broad array of community members and stakeholders in the healthcare community to create this model for healthcare transformation. I thank them and everyone at HFS for the hard work and indispensable input.

Through community focus groups, we heard over and over again that people in distressed communities want to be a part of the process in developing solutions that meet their needs. They do not want things done to them, but with them. Those that reside in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, many of whom are black and brown people, are increasingly worried about getting their health care needs met in a post-COVID world. Based on this feedback, the healthcare transformation model is designed to require care providers to really listen to people and involve them in solutions that address the historic, cultural, economic, racial, and logistical barriers they face in accessing quality health care and wellness services.

The heart of this bill is the creation of innovative partnerships between clinical healthcare sites and community-based organizations to address these challenges. The partnerships, which will include safety net, critical access and regional hospitals, as well as behavioral health providers, FQHCs, and community-based organizations, will collaborate to address social and structural determinants of health. These are things like the availability of healthy food, safe and affordable housing, reliable transportation, and other environmental factors which account for 50 percent of health outcomes but are not directly addressed in clinical settings.

We know the status quo isn't working when it comes to creating healthy communities, and we believe that addressing social and structural determinants of health will bring real, equitable, and sustainable change to our customers. Partnerships will be evidence- and outcomes-based, with clear performance metrics and proof of community involvement. Partnerships must prioritize the high levels of underlying

health conditions that resulted from systemic disinvestment, and they will provide full accountability and transparency to this body and our department. All partnership proposals - and I cannot stress this enough - will be evaluated using racial equity as a component of the awarding process. And all partnerships will have requirements for minority participation, empowering members of these communities to be involved as healthcare providers, equity partners, and suppliers.

In terms of expenditures, this proposal requires no new funding. It authorizes the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to expend \$60 million previously set aside for these projects, which will be federally matched for a total of \$150 million available for investment in innovative solutions to address health inequities in Illinois.

We look forward to working with you to bring about the kind of change we have heard our customers need, and we are looking forward to getting started as soon as possible. Thank you for your support.