



Health Care for All!

Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
2600 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

(410) 235-9000 (voice) ~ (410) 235-8963 (fax)
info@healthcareforall.com (e-mail) <http://www.healthcareforall.com>

September 27, 2010

**Eloise Foster, Secretary, Department of Budget and Management
Chairman Peter Hammen, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Governor's Coordinating Council on Health Care Reform, Health Care Delivery System
Workgroup**

Dear Sec. Foster and Chairman Hammen:

The Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition is made up of over 1,200 health care, business, faith, labor, and community groups from around the state that have endorsed our Health Care for All! Plan. Our Coalition strongly believes that all Marylanders should have access to quality and affordable health care.

The delivery of health care in the United States is fragmented and uncoordinated. This adds unnecessary risks and costs to people's health care experience. Lack of communication can be unsafe, even fatal, when abnormal test results are not communicated correctly, prescriptions from multiple doctors conflict with each other or primary care physicians do not receive hospital discharge plans for their patients. Uncoordinated care is also costly because of duplicated services, preventable hospital readmissions and the overuse of the more intensive procedures.

Health care reform will not be sustainable if it is simply about expanding access to a system that is not working properly. It should also include efforts to improve quality of life and decrease costs. Achieving this type of reform will require changing the way care is delivered, particularly to those with complex health needs, such as those with chronic conditions and dual Medicare/Medicaid beneficiaries. A cornerstone of this delivery system change is coordination of care.

We suggest a number of things to make sure Maryland will have the strongest and most efficient delivery system possible. Coordinated care models that work well for consumers tend to share a common set of core principles. They are:

- Placing the individual and family at the center of care planning and delivery
- Coordinating care across a continuum of medical and non-medical services, from primary and acute to long-term and home or community based care
- Implementing appropriate clinical and organizational supports needed to effectively coordinate care
- Establishing appropriate payment incentives for coordinating care and for integrating Medicare and Medicaid benefits
- Incorporating the consumer voice in plan governance.

Health Care



For All

Maryland Citizens'
Health Initiative

Health Care for All!

Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
2600 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

(410) 235-9000 (voice) ~ (410) 235-8963 (fax)

info@healthcareforall.com (e-mail) <http://www.healthcareforall.com>

We also believe that to have the most efficient system a wide array of stakeholders must be at the table. These must include, but are not limited to, providers, particularly primary care physicians and nurse practitioners. Public and private insurers must also be involved, such as Medicaid and Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans. Consumer groups across Maryland must be involved as well as labor and business groups. Finally, mission-driven plans and health delivery systems, such as Commonwealth Care Alliance in Massachusetts and AXIS Healthcare in Minnesota, and similar managed care systems for people with disabilities will be crucial.

We look forward to continuing to work with the workgroup and the entire Council to ensure that Federal Health Care reform here in Maryland can be maximized to make sure every Marylander has access to quality, affordable health care. If we can provide more detail on any of our suggestions we would be happy to provide more information or steer you to our experts at Community Catalyst, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Families USA, or other organizations that have provided us with critical technical knowledge and skill. We thank the Council for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Vincent DeMarco President,
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund, Inc.