



November 30, 2013

Ms. Victoria Veltri, Healthcare Advocate
Office of the Healthcare Advocate
PO Box 1543
Hartford, Connecticut 06144,

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Dear Ms. Veltri,

After reviewing the Connecticut State Innovation Model, we at the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) urge the committee to pay special attention to the unique challenges that families living near or below the federal poverty level face when trying to access the health care system. In addition to poverty, many of these families also face a language barrier. These issues are common in Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford, and we urge you to look at your proposal through the lens of poverty that many of our families are living.

Here at BCAC, we have helped many families navigate the application process for safety net services, including health care, over the past several years. One of the lessons we have learned is that much of the information regarding health care is not written in language that is easily understood or accessible (especially for our non-native English-speakers). In addition, the bureaucracy is daunting for many families; making the materials simpler and more accessible will go a long way to encouraging them to access the health care system.

While the shift to using technology for electronic medical records and adopting the health information technology working group's recommendations will streamline the health care system for many of Connecticut's residents, we urge you to use caution to avoid disenfranchising a large segment of the population. We know that many low-income families do not have access to a computer at home and they generally find technology to be intimidating. In fact, we recently discovered that one of our clients had not filled a much-needed prescription because the doctor had used an electronic prescription. She needed the prescription to be filled at the free clinic, but the doctor had sent it to a local pharmacy. Without the prescription in hand, she believed that she could not get the needed medicine, so she was suffering quietly instead. This lack of understanding is common amongst our families.

In addition, we hope you take into account how challenging it is for our families on HUSKY and Medicaid to find a physician, specialist, or dentist who is willing to participate in these programs. When they do find a doctor willing to see them, families often have a hard time getting transportation to the providers. We believe that this lack of providers in urban areas that are 2470 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605 • (203) 549-0075 • FAX (203) 549-0203

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accessible on public transportation is a major impediment to care for many families.

We are thrilled that the State is looking at the future of our health care delivery system in Connecticut, and we are also happy that the committee is considering the needs of consumers and highlighting quality of care. As the committee continues to develop this plan, we urge the members to remember the unique challenges that families living in poverty must deal with when trying to access care.

Sincerely,

Robin Lamott Sparks
Senior Director of Policy and Research