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TO: Practice Transformation Taskforce
State of Connecticut State Innovation Model

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Submitted for oral presentation at October 14, 2014 meeting

For nearly 20 years, AmeriCares Free Clinics have been providing quality health care to low income, uninsured residents of Fairfield County. With clinics located in Norwalk, Danbury, Bridgeport and Stamford, over 23,000 patients have received health care valued at over \$57 million.

Only those residents who are without health insurance and earn incomes less than 200-250% of the Federal Poverty Level qualify for our clinic services. Fairfield County has had the highest uninsured rates in Connecticut. With an estimated 150,000 remaining uninsured after implementation of the Affordable Care Act, and with a growing shortage of primary care providers we anticipate being busier than ever.

Our model is simple. We have access to rent-free space in three of our four clinic programs, and we are fortunate to have close to 300 volunteers to provide care and administrative support. All of our physicians, specialists and pediatricians are volunteers – in addition many community and hospital based practices see our patients in their office at no charge. Nurses, interpreters, NPs and screeners give their time be it a weekday or weekend and feel it is time well spent. We could not deliver the complex care needed for our patients, many diagnosed with diabetes or hypertension, without diagnostic testing. The hospitals serving our four communities all provide a full range of diagnostic testing to our patients at no charge. Quest Diagnostics provides free laboratory services in three of our four clinics. Our patients get the prescription medications they need to get well and manage their chronic conditions.

It is clear our hospital partners understand how important primary care is to this vulnerable population. Whether it is stabilizing chronic disease or making early diagnoses, both can keep the patient out of the emergency room and decrease avoidable hospitalizations which is in everyone's best interest.

Last year, we delivered health care valued at \$6.8 million to over 3,000 Fairfield County residents. Ninety-eight percent of our budget was funded by private sources and for every dollar donated \$4 of care was delivered. We achieved all this without any state or federal government funding.

AmeriCares Free Clinics is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and a program of AmeriCares. We are licensed as an outpatient clinic by the Department of Public Health and inspected on a regular basis. We deliver quality episodic and chronic care and have the diagnostic tools and systems in place to help low income, uninsured residents take care of themselves and their families. For some we are gap coverage – keeping them healthy between jobs and insurance; for others we are their only alternative for ongoing and accessible care.

AmeriCares Free Clinics is the largest free clinic program in Connecticut, operating four licensed clinics in Fairfield County. There are three other licensed free clinics in the state, and both UConn and Yale medical

students have free clinic programs. Free Clinics are not eligible for HIT funding through the ACA nor are we eligible for 340B drug pricing. We are NOT Federally Qualified Health Centers and do not receive state or federal funding. As an essential part of the safety net system in Connecticut, we work with hospital partners, private offices and the entire health care system. To be on the same playing field as our colleagues and for the safety of our patients and efficacy of our program we think it is imperative that you consider licensed free clinics whenever decisions are being made about system enhancements and available financial/expert support.

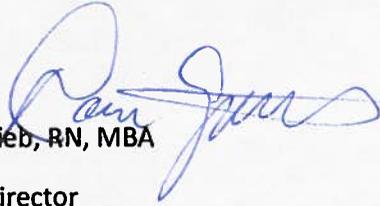
As you consider eligibility for practice transformation support such as electronic medical records and certification as patient centered medical home, we respectfully request that you include licensed free clinics serving the medical needs of Connecticut's uninsured.

Thank you,

Karen Gottlieb, RN, MBA

Executive Director

AmeriCares Free Clinics

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen Gottlieb", is written over the typed name and title.