



December 22, 2009

Tracy Plouck
State Medicaid Director
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services
Office of Ohio Health Plans (Medicaid)
50 West Town Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Tracy,

On behalf of the Early Childhood Cabinet, I am pleased to provide my support for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' proposal in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services request for applications for the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grants. The Ohio proposal describes an excellent model that will establish and evaluate a quality system for children's health care, through both care being provided through the Medicaid program and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The work that can be accomplished with this CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant will support the work of the newly proposed Center for Early Childhood Development by providing young children with the best possible chance of success in life. As you know, "Health, Behavioral Health and Nutrition" is one of the four major components of Ohio's early childhood system. Accessing quality health care is a critical service component to support the healthy development of children.

The Ohio proposal aims to significantly and measurably improve care and outcomes for children in Ohio who are covered by Medicaid. The proposed model utilizes an existing infrastructure of networks within Ohio – the children's hospitals, perinatal providers, successful collaborative efforts involving primary care practices—and involves state agencies, professional organizations, family advocacy groups, and researchers affiliated with state universities and children's hospitals. Through the systematic application of improvement science methods, this statewide collaboration seeks to achieve best in nation results for birth outcomes, developmental trajectories, and safe hospital care for children. And, as mandated in the CHIPRA legislation, the proposal also involves experimentation and evaluation of several promising ideas to improve the quality of children's healthcare and demonstrate improved outcomes.

You have assembled a strong leadership team that has the skills and experience to work effectively to measurably improve care and outcomes for children and families. I strongly support the vision that your group has developed and believe it will build capacity and capability to ensure quality health care and outcomes for children covered by Medicaid in Ohio. Should you need anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me at 614-728-7757 or alicia.leatherman@ode.state.oh.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alicia Leatherman".

Alicia Leatherman, Director
Early Childhood Cabinet