

March of Dimes Foundation

December 29, 2009

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Karen Keller
State Director

Dear Tracy,

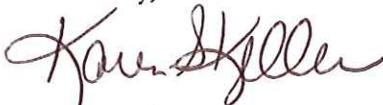
I am pleased to provide my enthusiastic support for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' proposal in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services request for applications for the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grants. The Ohio proposal describes an excellent model that will establish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

The Ohio proposal aims to significantly and measurably improve care and outcomes for children in Ohio who are covered by Medicaid through working at multiple levels of the health care system to provide integrated systems and continuity that address children's and families' needs across the pediatric lifespan. 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.

The Ohio March of Dimes promotes healthy birth outcomes through the prevention of prematurity, birth defects, and infant mortality. In 2009, the Ohio March of Dimes partnered with the Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative (OPQC) in its shared mission of preventing preterm births. Our focus involved educating parents and professionals on the importance of the final weeks of pregnancy and avoiding unnecessary scheduled deliveries, via induction or C-section, between 36 and 39 weeks. OPQC teams helped to evaluate the March of Dimes "brain card," which helps professionals explain to women fetal brain development during the final weeks of pregnancy. OPQC teams conducted PDSA cycles to explore the effectiveness of the card. In addition, Ohio March of Dimes has been a committed observer of the OPQC learning sessions and continues to support its efforts through the distribution of materials and resources. OPQC's impressive quality improvement initiative has received national attention from the March of Dimes and other public and professional health organizations. OPQC is part of Section C of this comprehensive grant request.

You have assembled a group that has the skills, experience, passion, and dedication to work effectively to measurably improve care and outcomes for children and families. I strongly recommend the vision that your group has developed and believe it will build capacity and capability to ensure quality healthcare and outcomes for children covered by Medicaid in Ohio. You have my strong support.

Sincerely,



Karen Keller
State Director