

February 21, 2016

Via email to medicaidtransformation@hca.wa.gov



MaryAnne Lindeblad, Medicaid Director
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LegalVoice.org

Re: Support for Medicaid Transformation project proposal - Primary Care Network – Women’s Health Home, P166

Dear Ms. Lindeblad,

As a nonprofit advocacy organization committed to advancing legal rights for women and girls in the Pacific Northwest, Legal Voice is committed to ensuring women of all ages have consistent access to high-quality health care throughout their lifetimes. To that end, we are writing in support of the “Primary Care Network – Women’s Health Home” (P166) Medicaid transformation project proposal.

Women and girls on Medicaid face more barriers in accessing consistent health care than women with private insurance. These barriers result not only in poor health outcomes generally, but also in a higher unintended pregnancy rate than non-Medicaid enrollees. Investment in innovative delivery models that support women’s health will contribute to substantial savings in costs due to unintended pregnancies as well as the long-term costs associated with poor birth outcomes. Pregnancies are the number one driver of Medicaid costs, and an estimated \$7 is saved for every \$1 invested in family planning services.

The Statewide Primary Care Network of Women’s Health Homes project proposal will advance the state’s goal of moving toward true delivery system reform and will improve the health and wellness of vulnerable populations. Low-income women tend to rely on reproductive health providers as their main source of health care, and these providers serve as a key entry point to the broader health care system.

Reproductive health care providers are well-positioned and uniquely qualified to serve as a woman’s health home and deliver lifelong value for women and measurable savings. In a health home role, in addition to cost-saving family planning services, reproductive health care providers offer a broad range of behavioral and preventive health care services that contribute to the overall health of women and families, such as screening for hypertension, obesity, diabetes, depression, cervical and breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, and smoking. These services and the

Women’s rights. Nothing less.

connection to follow-up care help prevent chronic conditions and avoid significant long-term health care costs.

Further, this project proposal will advance the triple-aim goal of providing better health care, improving population health, and reducing costs. In a sustainable value-based payment system that invests in a women's health home, Medicaid will ensure that women remain connected to crucial health care services to a continuum of care throughout their lives.

The Women's Health Home model will concretely advance the Medicaid Transformation Waiver in the following ways:

- Avoid unnecessary use of intensive health care services by reducing unintended pregnancy rates, improving birth outcomes, and preventing chronic health problems.
- Improve population health for women and families by improving access to behavioral and preventive health care and preventing and managing chronic illnesses such as hypertension, smoking, obesity, and breast and cervical cancers.
- Contain the growth of Medicaid spending by ensuring women and families have access to high-quality preventive and behavioral health care services throughout their lifetime.

We are committed to ensuring all women and girls in Washington have access to high-quality, compassionate, evidence-based care. The Medicaid population is among the most vulnerable health populations. Thus, we strongly urge the Health Care Authority to include this proposal in the final list of waiver projects to improve the lives of women and reduce costs to the state.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janet S. Chung". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet S. Chung
Legal & Legislative Counsel