



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii

TO: Washington State Health Care Authority
Medicaid Transformation Demonstration Waiver Team

February 21, 2016

As the advocacy arm representing four Planned Parenthood affiliates that serve more than 40,000 Apple Health clients annually, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest & Hawaii is committed to innovative, cost-effective ways to deliver high-quality care to Medicaid enrollees. We encourage the state and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to adopt transformation projects that directly address women's unique health care needs and acknowledge the tremendous cost savings that reproductive health care providers contribute to the Medicaid system. To this end, we write in strong support of the Primary Care Network – Women's Health Home project proposal.

We believe the Primary Care Network of Women's Health Homes project is the among the most promising to help Washington achieve true delivery system transformation and improve the health and wellness of key populations consistent with the overarching aims of the waiver project. The proposed model would lead to substantial improvements in health outcomes at lower program costs – investment in family planning yields an estimated \$7 in savings per \$1 invested, and the women's health home builds upon these significant savings that reproductive health care providers already contribute to the health care system. The women's health home concept offers a sustainable way to support healthy women's lives across their lifespan, while improving outcomes, reducing costs, and transforming health care delivery.

The project advances the key goals of the Medicaid Transformation Waiver in the following concrete ways:

- Reducing unintended pregnancy rates and improving birth outcomes avoids the use of more intensive health care services in the future and can reduce the need for long-term engagements in the health care system.
- Maintaining continuous access to behavioral and preventive health care improves population health for women and families by preventing and managing chronic illnesses such as hypertension, smoking, obesity, and breast and cervical cancers.
- By consistently providing preventive and behavioral health care services—on top of cost-saving family planning services—reproductive health care providers contribute to bending the cost curve to contain the growth of Medicaid spending.

The women's health home proposal would recognize and reward reproductive health providers for the high-value impact of their culturally competent, patient-centered family planning and primary care services. Research shows that low-income women tend to rely on reproductive health care providers as their primary (or only) source of care, or as pivotal entry points to the broader health care system and essential community resources, such as behavioral health services and social supports. Reproductive health care is at the center of what many women

need to stay healthy, according to recent guidelines.¹ Reproductive health providers offer family planning services and critical preventive care screenings and interventions, routinely filling the role of primary care provider for women of reproductive age. The proposed model emphasizes and builds on the key relationship women have with their reproductive health providers. In fact, women report that they are 16 percent more likely to be open and honest with reproductive health providers over other providers.² This makes women's health care providers uniquely positioned to screen for mental and behavioral health disorders, including anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and intimate partner violence, as well as refer out for more extensive needs.

The model is structured to meet the needs of these women by offering direct access to health professionals most qualified to meet their needs, versus current medical home models that take a one-size-fits-all approach. This is in line with Sec. 3021(2)(B)(i) of the Affordable Care Act that instructed CMS to develop a model that has an OB/GYN provider as the primary provider and care coordinator to ensure that medical homes address the unique health care needs of women. In a health home role, a reproductive health provider offers 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 links to follow-up care prevent chronic conditions and can avoid significant long-term health care costs. As a direct provider of family planning services, reproductive health providers help prevent unintended pregnancies and the associated long-term term costs of poor birth outcomes.

The Women's Health Home project would move health care delivery away from the current fragmented system that requires Medicaid enrollees to navigate distinct silos of different health care providers, by coordinating the broad range of services that women rely on at their trusted women's health care provider. Coordinating and streamlining health care delivery through this project will advance the triple-aim goal of providing better health care, improving population health, and reducing costs. By investing in these centers as health homes and primary care providers, Medicaid can ensure that women remain connected to crucial services and maintain access to a continuum of care throughout their lives.

We strongly and enthusiastically urge you to include this project in the final list of waiver initiatives.

Sincerely,



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¹ Well Woman Care: Assessments & Recommendations. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. July 16, 2013. <http://www.acog.org/-/media/Departments/Annual-Womens-Health->

² PerryUndem Research & Communication. "Women & OB/GYN providers". Research conducted for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, November 2013.