Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2015

Andrew Slavitt
Acting Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Dear Administrator Slavitt:

We write in support of New York State's application for a Fully-Integrated Dual Advantage (FIDA) program for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD). The application submitted by Partners Health Plan (PHP) represents an exceptional opportunity for New York State to meaningfully improve care for this vulnerable population. The start of this much-anticipated managed care pilot program has been significantly delayed and we are worried that any continued delay could jeopardize the program's financial viability. Substantial resources have already been invested into the program but it can no longer maintain its current holding pattern.

For more than four years, the Nassau County and New York City AHRCs, in alliance with the Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester AHRCs have labored diligently to develop and implement a new managed care program to provide comprehensive, fully integrated supports and services for adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (IDD) through a new not-for-profit organization called Partners Health Plan (PHP).

In 2013, PHP applied to CMS and New York State to operate as a Medicare-Medicaid plan so that they could participate in New York's Fully Integrated Duals Advantage (FIDA) program, a new program to serve the elderly and disabled who are dually enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid. On its "Model of Care" document, independently evaluated and scored by National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), PHP received a score of 95 percent – among the highest in New York State – and they were awarded a three-year approval, the maximum permitted by CMS. Partners Health Plan is now one of 25 plans approved in New York for the FIDA program, with a special designation as a FIDA-DD plan as PHP will only enroll and serve adults with IDD.

The AHRCs have made a significant financial investment in developing this program, obtaining state and federal approvals, designing their Model of Care, and building a network of medical, behavioral, dental, and developmental services providers throughout the metropolitan region with experience and expertise in serving this population. They have also designed and developed an IT infrastructure to support all of the plan's operations. To date nearly $10 million has been invested. Over the course of this effort, PHP has had the support and encouragement of the NYS Governor's Office, the NYS Department of Health, and the NYS Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. As the governor undertook a major reform of the state's Medicaid program, PHP took up the challenge to develop an improved delivery and financing system for beneficiaries with developmental disabilities.

However, it is our understanding that CMS will not finalize this application until other Medicaid discussions between CMS and NYS are complete, despite meeting all state and federal requirements and the expenditure of millions of dollars. This is unacceptable.

Partners Health Plan is now at a critical juncture and time is running out. The planned start date of July 1, 2015 is now in jeopardy and if CMS does not move to approve this initiative and complete a Memorandum of Understanding with NYSDOH very soon, even a start date beginning this fall will become unlikely.

We urge you to move forward with the FIDA-DD program and to expedite the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding for this initiative. Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to a timely resolution to these ongoing negotiations.

Sincerely,

STEVE ISRAEL
Member of Congress

PETER T. KING
Member of Congress

KATHLEEN M. RICE
Member of Congress

CHARLES B. RANGEL
Member of Congress

GRACE MENG
Member of Congress

NITA LOWEY
Member of Congress

JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
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GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress

JOSÉ E. SERRANO
Member of Congress

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress