



Maryland
Hospital Association

November 23, 2015

John M. Colmers
Chairman, Health Services Cost Review Commission
3910 Keswick Road
Suite N-2200
Baltimore, Maryland 21211

Dear Chairman Colmers:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's 66 member hospitals and health systems, I am writing in support of Option 3 of the staff proposals for the Health Jobs Opportunity Program, with one important modification related to the level of funding. As the hospital field commits to further development of this important program's design and implementation with the commission, we cannot support the up-front funding limitation of \$5 million indicated by staff; instead, the amount and its source should be defined by the further work to be done under Option 3.

We appreciate the thoughtful consideration that staff has given in its proposed range of options for the jobs program, and would agree with commissioner comments made at the November 18 public meeting, that the needs of addressing health care disparities throughout the state, including the lack of meaningful job opportunities in areas of high unemployment and poverty, is one of the most challenging issues the commission has had to address. While the proposed options fall short of the \$40 million in new rate funding that supporters requested to begin to address these needs, Option 3 will allow hospitals to continue to explore these challenges and solutions with the commission. Options 1 and 2 are not acceptable to the hospital field, as they would divert equally important competitive transformation implementation grant funds toward the Health Jobs Opportunity Program. As collaborative efforts are well under way for the expected December 21 submission of those grant applications, we believe it would be inappropriate to redirect any portion of those funds — even to meet the important goals of the jobs program.

We look forward to your consideration of our recommendation at the December 9 public meeting.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Robbins
Senior Vice President

cc: Herbert Wong, PhD, Vice Chairman
George H. Bone, MD
Stephen F. Jencks, MD, MPH
Jack C. Keane
Donna Kinzer, Executive Director
Bernadette Loftus, MD
Thomas R. Mullen