

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201



May 13, 2013

Dear Potential Essential Community Provider,

I am writing to you because you have been identified as a provider of care that may be considered an Essential Community Provider (ECP) under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA requires that qualified health plans (QHPs) offered on the State-based and Federally-facilitated Marketplaces in 2014 must include a sufficient number and geographic distribution of ECPs in their service area to provide access for low-income and medically underserved individuals. I want to encourage you to avail yourself of any opportunities to participate in the QHPs that will be offered in the Health Insurance Marketplaces and to provide you with related resources that I hope will be of use to you.

In collaboration with states, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will monitor QHPs for network adequacy and ECP sufficiency. Issuers seeking certification of their health plans as QHPs and issuers offering QHPs must comply with the network adequacy and ECP standards set forth in 45 C.F.R. §§156.230 and 156.235. CMS urges issuers offering QHPs to include provider networks with robust ECP participation.

At this time, health insurance issuers that wish to establish QHPs may be approaching you with offers to join their provider networks. Whether or not you are currently engaged with private insurers, I encourage you to thoughtfully consider these overtures. Many of the patients whom you serve will be eligible to purchase health insurance from these QHPs. Coverage in QHPs will begin on January 1, 2014. It is important that individuals are able to choose QHPs with networks that allow them to continue obtaining care from their current medical providers.

Information about QHPs and ECPs is available in the attached FAQs, and on our website at <http://cciio.cms.gov/>. We have also established the following email address through which you may submit inquiries: essentialcommunityproviders@cms.hhs.gov. Please include your city and state in the subject line of your inquiry. Thank you for the care you provide to this nation's low-income and medically underserved individuals and families.

Sincerely,

/s/

Gary Cohen

Director

Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight