



January 20, 2017

Governor John Bel Edwards  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 94004  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Lance Harris Budget Plan, Devastating Impact to Health Outcomes

Dear Governor Edwards:

We have seen recent media coverage of a plan released by State Representative Lance Harris to make current fiscal year cuts in the amount of over \$300 million. We are concerned about the impact to healthcare delivery that will be caused by his proposed cuts.

Under Harris' plan, it has been reported that the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) would be cut by \$147,156,472. This cut would defund all of the public-private partnerships and eliminate waiver programs, among other critical health care programs – all with only 4 months left in the fiscal year to implement the cuts. In addition, LDH has already calculated that the cuts would cause loss of matching federal funds such that the total fiscal impact of Harris' proposed cuts on LDH would be \$423,000,000.

I write today to you as a leader of one of Louisiana's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC). We do not receive a state allocation in the budget. And, we were proud to help you lead the charge to expand Medicaid in Louisiana... a move that saved our state money this year and will continue to have exponential returns. But, our patients' overall health outcomes will be impacted severely if these cuts move forward. Our state just progressed from 50<sup>th</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> in overall health outcomes. However, if our patients lose access to area hospitals because public private partnerships dissolve, if our patients with disabilities lose life-saving waiver services that allow their families to remain productive members of our communities, and, if other so-called "discretionary" health care programs are cut, we'll go back to being last in overall health outcomes. Moreover, worse yet, our patients' health will suffer and some will die!

Therefore, with an appreciation for just how tough our current state budget situation is, I write on behalf of FQHC leaders today to tell you that we do not support the cuts proposed in Harris' plan and we stand with you to seek solution-driven ideas for balancing our budget that value the lives and well-being of our patients.

Sincerely,

Alecia Cyprian, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Southeast Community Health Systems  
6351 Main Street, Zachary LA 70791