



FRANCISCAN  
MISSIONARIES  
OF OUR LADY  
HEALTH SYSTEM

January 24, 2017

The Honorable John Bel Edwards  
Governor of Louisiana  
P.O. Box 94004  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor Edwards:

We are aware of Representative Lance Harris' proposal to solve the State's current budget challenge with substantial cuts of \$147 million to the Department of Health. Once again, the health of Louisiana families would be at tremendous risk.

Representative Harris' plan was described in the press as focused on travel, salaries, and supplies. While there are likely opportunities for greater efficiencies in those areas, we are concerned that the reduction in funding will necessitate further payment reductions to providers. Already, cuts in recent years total more than 25% and by some estimates are as high as 40%. With every reduction in reimbursement, the State limits the capacity of doctors and hospitals to provide needed services.

Prior to the public-private partnerships across our state, Louisiana had a very fragile safety net healthcare system of hospitals and clinics and our State consistently ranked lowest in most health status indicators. Improvements are beginning with positive reports now including childhood immunization rates increasing and pediatric obesity rates declining. Today we have largely stabilized the access to care, even with the additional families now covered through Medicaid expansion. In fact, one-third of Louisiana's population are Medicaid recipients with many of those children. Contemplating the further cuts in Representative Harris' plan would imperil the very people who need this care the most and the future health of Louisiana.

You should be proud of the stability that has returned to training future physicians through the public-private partnerships. We have been pleased to serve as clinical teaching sites in both Baton Rouge and Bogalusa, already earning national recognition for innovation, quality and resident leadership and graduating clinicians who are choosing their futures right here in our state. None of us can afford to lose this momentum.

On behalf of all of our hospitals and healthcare organizations within the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System, we urge that you carefully

January 24, 2017  
Page 2 of 2

consider the potential impact further cuts to the provider system would have on access to needed services by our State's most vulnerable population as well as the future physicians to care for us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Finan, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John J. Finan, Jr.  
President/CEO

JF/lv

cc: Sr. Barbara Arceneaux, FMOL, Provincial  
Mr. James W. Moore, Jr., FMOLHS Board Chair