

RYAN CENTER

William F. Ryan Community Health Center

August 31, 2006

Randall L. Johnson, Chair
Citizens' Health Care Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 575
Bethesda, MD 20814

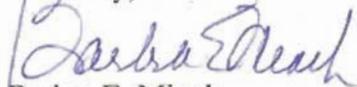
Dear Mr. Johnson:

The William F. Ryan Community Health Center Network (William F. Ryan Community Health Center, Ryan-NENA Community Health Center and Ryan/Chelsea Clinton Community Health Center) in New York City, supports the Citizens' Health Care Working Group (CHCWG) in its efforts to include citizen input on improving access to quality health care for all Americans. However, I am deeply concerned regarding the second proposal in the recently released "Interim Recommendations". This proposal, if implemented, would decimate one of the most successful federal health programs. The recommendation to "expand and modify the FQHC concept to accommodate" other providers, is not an improvement towards better health care. It will essentially provide a vehicle to remove the core essence, the heart and soul of what has made the FQHC's such a successful model for affordable health care - and that is patient input, control and decision-making.

In addition, I am concerned that the topic of the modification of FQHC statutes was not an official part of the agenda at the April 22nd Working Group meeting in New York City. Given the serious implications of the second proposal, it was imperative that there should have been a full and open discussion by all the statewide health center representatives and CHCANYS who attended the meeting. As advocates and members of the health center community, including the Citizen's Working Group, we have always made it our responsibility to engage in active conversation together, and together worked out any differences.

Therefore, I am asking you to remove this recommendation, and work with, and support the health center representatives across the country in building upon continued successes of community boards and their community-governed health centers.

Sincerely,



Barbra E. Minch
President and CEO