

MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU, MAYOR  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

November 15, 2012

Honorable Bobby Jindal  
Governor, State of Louisiana  
P.O. Box 94004  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Secretary Bruce Greenstein  
State of Louisiana  
Department of Health and Human Services  
628 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Dear Governor Jindal and Secretary Greenstein:

I write today to urge the State to reconsider its current position and take full advantage of the exciting opportunities provided by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to create a Louisiana coverage exchange. The ACA is designed to expand access to healthcare and will not only improve the health of our citizens, but help sustain our workforce and economic vitality. Already, Louisianans have greatly benefited from the ACA- 53,000 young adults under 26 years old are now covered on their parent's insurance, last summer 75,493 Louisianans received rebates from their insurance company, and 487,292 seniors now have access to free preventive services.

These are critical improvements, but more needs to be done, and if fully enacted the ACA will further benefit an estimated 600,000 Louisianans, the majority of whom are working poor. These are hardworking, salt of the earth Louisianans- construction workers, waiters, fishermen, health care professionals, and those in the tourism industry- all of whom are critical to the fiscal health of our state. We need them healthy and on the job.

Furthermore, failure to expand coverage is bad for business and will limit our ability to attract new companies and industry to Louisiana. Plus, inaction will mean a continuation of the \$1,000 hidden tax on the insured and will lead to continued increases in premiums. And with the federal government providing 93% of ACA financing for the first decade, it is a good deal for Louisiana.

I am disheartened that the State has chosen to not create a Louisiana insurance exchange crafted for our specific needs, but rather default to the national federal insurance exchange. We are missing a golden opportunity to create our own, best solution to improve health outcomes. I realize that creating a Louisiana exchange would require investments for planning and development. And given that the prior planning grant was rejected, the City of New Orleans will work with the State to request that HHS provide new funds for planning and start up for a Louisiana exchange.



We can do this and have already demonstrated that we can create cutting edge, innovative solutions that provide coverage and access to care. The Greater New Orleans Community Health Connection Section 1115 A Medicaid Waiver (GNOCHC) is a perfect example of State, City and community providers working in concert to create a program that works for Louisiana. It has helped 55,000 individuals gain access to care. We can build on this success and take the lessons we have learned to further expand coverage for all low income Louisianans. We desperately need a plan that will work for us and meet the modern health needs of our residents, and we can do it through programs like GNOCHC, a national model that your administration has called "successful."

This is not about politics; this is about the health and future of our community. This is about 680 Louisianans who die every year due to lack of insurance. This is about thousands of residents who are one accident or illness away from ending up in the Emergency Room and becoming an expensive burden for the taxpayers of our State. This is about having healthy workers and a strong economy. We can and must do something. The people of Louisiana are counting on us to passionately advocate for them. We must all work together to ensure that our residents can again access vital health care services.

Again, I am asking you to reconsider your position in order to benefit the hard working men and women of Louisiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Landrieu', written in a cursive style.

Mitchell J. Landrieu  
Mayor, City of New Orleans