



TED STRICKLAND
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

June 25, 2007

Via overnight mail

Isabel Friedenzohn, MPH
Senior Associate
State Coverage Initiatives
AcademyHealth
1801 K. Street N.W., Suite 701-L
Washington, D.C. 2006-1309

Re: State Coverage Initiatives (SCI) Coverage Institute
Ohio's Request to Participate

Dear Ms. Friedenzohn:

Far too many Ohioans, including too many children, have no affordable health insurance coverage, have no reliable access to health care, and have health problems that can be prevented or controlled. Since becoming Ohio's Governor in January, I have taken steps to address these problems. The budget I submitted to the General Assembly earlier this year, which garnered bipartisan support, extended Medicaid to more children, pregnant women and disabled adults – which is a good first step. But additionally, I assembled a team of key leaders in my administration to work with the Ohio General Assembly, stakeholders and the public to develop a bipartisan, comprehensive plan to make affordable health coverage available to all of Ohio's uninsured; to improve the cost, quality and efficiency of Ohio's health care system; and to improve the health of all Ohioans.

The SCI Coverage Institute comes at the right time for Ohio. Over the next several months, my administration will be talking with the General Assembly, all key stakeholders and the public about concrete proposals that provide meaningful access to coverage for all of Ohio's uninsured. Together we will confront the hard realities of Ohio's current situation, address the tough decisions that must be made, and most importantly, work to develop creative reform strategies that will allow Ohio to fix a system which, for many, is currently broken. The Coverage Institute can be an important part of that process.

Page Two

June 25, 2007

Ms. Isabel Friedenzohn, MPH

The opportunity for leaders in my administration, legislative leaders and key stakeholders to work together at the Coverage Institute to discuss and evaluate reforms in a facilitated, team-based process will only improve Ohio's ability to develop an effective, comprehensive plan. The people who have agreed to participate underscore the importance of this undertaking and the broad-based support that is required. Members of the team include my Policy Director, Ohio's Medicaid Director, the Director of Healthy Ohio, and the Interim Assistant Director of Health Coverage Policy at the Ohio Department of Insurance. The team also includes four key state legislators selected by the leadership of the Ohio General Assembly, including two Democrats and two Republicans. Leaders from four important stakeholder organizations will also participate including the Ohio Business Roundtable, the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, the legal aid community and labor. My hope is that the work done at the Coverage Institute will help build the knowledge base, understanding and cooperation that must occur for Ohio to pass comprehensive reform.

In the next several days, the State of Ohio will submit an application to become a participant in the Coverage Institute. The application will detail the problems facing Ohio, the work being done to solve them, and the commitment of my administration, legislative leaders and the people of Ohio to reach a solution. Doug Anderson, Interim Assistant Director of Health Coverage Policy at the Ohio Department of Insurance, will serve as the team leader and primary contact. He may be reached at (614) 719-1579 or douglas.anderson@ins.state.oh.us.

It is my hope that the Coverage Institute will play an important role in Ohio developing a comprehensive plan to cover its uninsured citizens. We look forward to the opportunity to participate.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Strickland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ted Strickland
Governor of the State of Ohio

cc: SCI Coverage Institute Ohio Team Members