

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, local & community efforts.

Governor



John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

February 23, 2016

Louis B. St. Petery, M.D.
Tallahassee Primary Care Associates
1132 Lee Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Dear Dr. St. Petery:

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding several issues related to the Department's Children's Medical Services (CMS) programs and managed care plan. We share the same passion for ensuring that all of Florida's children with special health care needs receive the care and services they require to improve their health status and reach their full potential. As you know, the Department assists children with special health care needs and their families in partnership with public and private entities through many programs and services.

The CMS managed care plan ensures that more than 63,000 children in Florida with special health care needs have active case management and access to all medically necessary services through a robust provider network. As a specialty plan, enrollment in the CMS managed care plan is limited to children with chronic and serious health conditions, and screening to ensure clinical eligibility is required annually. For the 13,074 children who were identified last summer through a parent-based survey as more appropriately served by another managed care plan, rescreening at any time has always been an option for families. The Department has made opportunities for rescreening clear through its website, public statements, and in response to specific inquiries from families. While federal regulations prohibit direct marketing to children currently being served by another managed care plan, the Department recently worked with the Agency for Health Care Administration to make its notification letter to parents even more clear by adding another sentence to the correspondence that states, "You can ask for another screening for your child" and details how to do so. If there are children in Florida with chronic and serious conditions that would benefit from the CMS managed care plan, the Department is committed to ensuring the CMS Plan is an enrollment option for their families.

The Department also created a second pathway to establish clinical eligibility for the CMS Plan -- a diagnosis-based physician attestation form to facilitate automatic clinical eligibility. Thank you for participating in the rulemaking process used to establish the Department's current attestation form. The Department is committed to ensuring that all diagnoses necessary to identify children with chronic and serious conditions are listed on the attestation form. It is for that reason that during rulemaking the Department committed to reopening the rule in just three months to ensure the attestation form includes all necessary diagnoses. The next rule workshop is scheduled for April 20th. Through your multiple meetings with Department staff since rulemaking ended in December, you have ensured that your concerns will be addressed at the April rule workshop which is the most appropriate forum to facilitate necessary changes to the rule.

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Louis B. St. Petery, M.D.

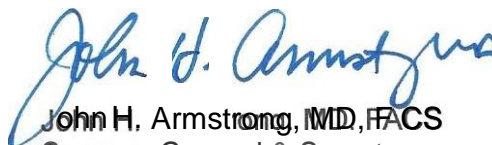
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As for your concerns regarding quality cardiac surgery programs for Florida's children, please know that the Department has consistently supported public reporting of surgical outcomes to drive performance improvement efforts in each of Florida's pediatric cardiac programs. I value the collaboration that exists within the professional community of Florida's pediatric cardiac surgeons. That is why I created the Cardiac Technical Advisory Panel. The Department remains committed to driving performance through professional collaboration and transparency related to outcomes.

In an agency of many competing priorities, CMS remains one of the highest priorities for the Department and for me personally. The Department remains engaged with the CMS regional medical directors by way of weekly telephone calls and a recent meeting in Tampa. We look forward to resolution of currently pending legal matters so that our dialogue with a broader pediatric stakeholder community can lead to collaboration on behalf of Florida's children with special health care needs. It will take our collective efforts to ensure the success of CMS in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John H. Armstrong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
Surgeon General & Secretary