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March 1, 2018

Healthy Ohio Program 1115 Demonstration Waiver
Bureau of Health Plan Policy
Ohio Department of Medicaid
50 W Town St., 5th Floor
Columbus OH 43215

Dear Director Sears:

On behalf of the 4,900 family physician, family medicine resident and medical student members of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, I write to express extreme concern with the Ohio Department of Medicaid's decision to seek federal approval to implement a work requirement for Medicaid expansion enrollees on July 1, 2018.

As primary care physicians serving on the front lines of patient care in Ohio, we know firsthand that approval of Ohio's waiver application would be a devastating blow to progress made in providing health care coverage to Ohio's Medicaid and other low-income populations. This waiver application, as written, threatens coverage of an estimated 36,000 adult Ohioans who now have coverage – a huge step backward in achieving the American Academy of Family Physicians' long-standing goal of achieving health care coverage for all. This waiver, if approved, reverses gains made when Medicaid was expanded and care was improved by transitioning services from expensive hospital emergency departments to less expensive outpatient settings.

We understand that many states are pursuing policies to seek to undermine Medicaid expansion provided under the ACA. This particular step in the process to dismantle the ACA will lead to broad disenrollment of Ohioans who need health care coverage. This waiver increases administrative burdens for physicians, other health care professionals and county governmental agencies who have to implement the work requirement; thus expending more time on paperwork leaving less time for meeting human needs.

Reducing coverage and access is not the direction we should be heading as a state or nation. Please reject Ohio's 1115 waiver application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donald O. Mack, MD
President