

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 18, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:


As you know, President Barack Obama declared a federal emergency in Flint, Michigan, due to widespread lead contamination of the community's drinking water, and the Department of Health and Human Services was tasked with coordinating the federal recovery effort. Since that time, our offices have worked closely with you and the Department's family of agencies to ensure that the federal government uses every tool at its disposal to assist this community, particularly Flint's children, and mitigate the ongoing health needs arising from exposure to lead. Now, we call on you to swiftly accept Michigan's section 1115 waiver to allow coverage for Flint's children up to the age of twenty-one regardless of income.


On Friday, you announced that the Department would continue working with Michigan to ensure that pregnant women and children in Flint have broader access to health services such as lead-blood monitoring, behavioral services, and nutritional support through the Medicaid program. Because of your commitment to work with State and local leaders to address the health needs in Flint, our governor, Rick Snyder, has formally requested that the federal government accept the State's section 1115 waiver to allow the State's Medicaid plan to cover Flint's children up to the age of twenty-one regardless of income. Based on the State's estimates, an additional 15,000 Flint residents could benefit from this program enhancement.


As you know, Medicaid is a federal-state partnership that affords states wide flexibility to tailor a program to address unique issues in an individual state. Here, Michigan has an opportunity to enhance its State Medicaid program to address the ongoing health needs in Flint following unprecedented lead exposure in that community. While there remains much work for all of us to do to continue to mitigate the damage, we believe this expansion of the Medicaid program is an important step by our State's government to address some of the harm to this community.

Your commitment to this recovery effort and the hands-on approach your team has taken in the last few weeks is appreciated and encouraging. We ask for continued commitment to the people of Flint by swiftly accepting the State's Section 1115 waiver to ensure that Flint's children have access to health coverage up to age twenty-one regardless of income. We also call on you to continue to work with us and the State of Michigan to address the many health needs this community will face for years to come.

Sincerely,

  
Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senator

  
Gary C. Peters  
U.S. Senator

  
Dan Kildee  
Member of Congress