



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Corbett's 2013-14 Budget: Focused on Healthcare Improvements and Increased Access to Care

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett today outlined his 2013-14 budget, calling for increased access to healthcare services for the underinsured and underserved, and for additional programs that will enhance public health research and outreach across the state.

The governor's proposed 2013-14 budget allocates \$5 million in rural and underserved areas that will fund community health centers and additional medical services, as well as expand programs to help attract and retain healthcare practitioners.

"In Pennsylvania, two million people live in communities that the federal government has designated as medically underserved," Acting Secretary of Health Michael Wolf said. "This new proposed funding demonstrates the Corbett Administration's commitment to improving and increasing access to healthcare services in Pennsylvania, especially in rural areas."

The proposal provides \$4 million to establish the Community-Based Health Care Subsidy program as a way for the commonwealth to create new community-based healthcare clinics and expand services at existing clinics. These community-based clinics will create immediate access to or enhance preventative primary care services to underserved areas and uninsured individuals of the state.

Another \$1 million will be dedicated to the Primary Health Practitioner Loan Repayment Program (LRP) to recruit and retain healthcare providers in rural and underserved areas. The LRP expansion will create 24 new loan repayment slots for physicians, dentists and other healthcare practitioners.

"We estimate this additional \$5 million will greatly expand access to healthcare for patients in rural and underserved areas, making a significant positive impact on the health of Pennsylvanians," Wolf said.

Details of the LRP include:

- **Public-Private Partnerships (Match Funding):** The department will partner with existing residency programs and provide funding to support additional residency slots. The department will fund the salaries for these slots, while the residency program (i.e., hospitals in most cases) will fund all

other expenses (benefits, housing allowances, costs associated with training).

- **Keeping Doctors In Pennsylvania:** Slots supported through this program will be available only to candidates who are Pennsylvania residents with a preference for those who have completed their medical education at a Pennsylvania medical school.
- **Primary Care for Rural & Underserved:** The department will partner with residency programs whose primary purpose is to train physicians for primary care practice and will give priority to those programs that specifically train physicians for practice in rural and underserved communities. Pennsylvania graduate physicians who demonstrate a strong desire and aptitude for future practice in rural and underserved areas will be given preference for the department-funded residency slots.

“A critical component of increasing access to care in rural areas is to ensure that there are healthcare professionals dedicated to working in these areas of the state,” Wolf said. “This will not only allow Pennsylvania to be more competitive with other states, but will allow residents in rural areas of the state to have consistent access to the same practitioners and build a network of care that will be a much-needed resource in these communities.”

In addition to these programs, the governor’s budget proposal also includes:

- Retained funding, \$14 million, for tobacco cessation and prevention programs; and
- Continued commitment to the Commonwealth Universal Research Enhancement (CURE) program, allocating approximately \$42 million for grants to Pennsylvania-based researchers, universities, medical schools and other institutions for clinical, health services and biomedical research.

“Over the past 11 years, the CURE program has awarded more than \$755 million in grants and funded more than 1,700 health research projects in the state,” Wolf said. “This has created opportunities for new scientific discoveries that are being applied toward improving the health of all Pennsylvanians. We applaud the Governor’s continued commitment to CURE as well as the creation of new, innovative programs that will serve those whom need them most.”

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