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Governor Christie Strengthens Programs to Empower New Jersey's Most Vulnerable Citizens and Provide Critical Health Services

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Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Expands Access to Health Care for New Jerseyans Most In Need While Implementing Innovative Reforms

Trenton, NJ – Acting on his commitment to deliver improved and expanded health services to New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens, Governor Chris Christie and Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez today visited the Metropolitan Family Health Network (MFHN) in Jersey City to outline how these programs provide critical health services and care for individuals and families who need it most. The program is one of 105 Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) sites in New Jersey that is supported with \$50 million in funding in Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget to cover the costs of treating the uninsured. Since 2006, Metropolitan Family Health Network (MFHN) has provided quality, affordable healthcare to thousands of residents of Hudson County.

"Centers like Metropolitan Family Health Network demonstrate what we are trying to accomplish on the state level - to provide a comprehensive array of services for those in need in an efficient, effective manner that focuses on each individual's unique needs," said Governor Christie. "There's no doubt that community health centers play a significant role in providing healthcare access to New Jersey families who need it most. That's why our support remains at an all-time high, and with new programs being implemented, such as our Medicaid expansion, our ability to deliver preventive services will be even stronger."

Physicians and healthcare professionals at MFHN provide comprehensive services for children, adults and pregnant women, including a full service pharmacy and a dental suite. There are more than 50,000 patient visits a year to Metropolitan's three center sites - two of which are located in Jersey City and one other in West New York.

"FQHCs are a critical element to the health care infrastructure for under-insured and uninsured New Jersey residents," said Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "With the expansion of Medicaid, we are building on reforms to the program that were underway, emphasizing prevention and coordination of care so that clients get the services they need to stay healthy."

"We are honored to welcome Governor Christie to Metropolitan Family Health Network," said Metropolitan Family Health Network President and Chief Executive Officer Joan Dublin, RN, MPA, ACHE. "As a Federally Qualified Community Health Center we offer a complete roster of services - including state-of-the-art dental care - to provide holistic care for the underserved people of our community. We thank Governor Christie and Commissioner Velez for their dedication in ensuring that the uninsured children, men and women of our community will have the care they need by expanding New Jersey FamilyCare and increasing the number of people who will be eligible for Medicaid."

Since taking office, Governor Christie has been committed to strengthening programs that provide critical health services to New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens. Through increased or protected funding for critical programs, as well as a fundamental rethinking of how government agencies serve citizens, the Christie Administration is expanding access and improving care to better meet the needs of individuals.

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That's why Governor Christie is taking action to expand health care coverage for New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens, while building on the Administration's nationally recognized record of efficient, responsible and compassionate management of the State's Medicaid program. Expanding Medicaid will mean that more New Jerseyans with annual incomes at or near the poverty line will have access to critical health services beginning in January 2014. More importantly, through this continued commitment, New Jersey's most in need individuals are getting the support they need to live their lives on their own terms.

Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget enhances the ability of state government to deliver a broader array of health services to women, children, families and individuals in need. This includes:

Increasing Access to Health Care Centers: New Jersey's 105 community health center sites serves nearly a half million residents in need, with patient visits exceeding 1.4 million annually. Support by the Christie Administration for these centers remains at an all-time high of \$50 million.

Expanding Health Care Access through Medicaid: Governor Christie is taking action to expand health care coverage for New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens through Medicaid. Doing so will mean that more New Jerseyans at or near the poverty line will have access to critical health services, while saving New Jersey taxpayers approximately **\$227 million** in Fiscal Year 2014 alone.

Bold and Innovative Medicaid Reform: New Jersey has received approval of its Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver, which allows the state to move forward with Medicaid reforms that are already resulting in more compassionate and effective care for our state's most vulnerable residents and will help to preserve the program over the long term while at the same time reducing costs to New Jersey taxpayers. New Jersey is one of very few states across the country that advanced Medicaid reform without affecting eligibility, imposing co-pays or cutting optional services.

Increasing Support for Uninsured Children: The Christie Administration has demonstrated its commitment to providing subsidized health coverage for uninsured children and has even been recognized for performance excellence in enrolling children in the FamilyCare program. Proposed funding for children in FamilyCare is increased by \$6.4 million to over **\$122 million**, and will support coverage for over 164,000 children.

Protecting Funding for Cancer Screening: Governor Christie has preserved Fiscal Year 2013's \$3.5 million funding increase for a total of **\$12 million** in state and federal support for The New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection Program, which provides cancer outreach, screening and follow-up services.

Newborn Screening: Every baby born in New Jersey is eligible to be screened for 54 disorders that can cause serious health problems. With state investment and implementation of Emma's Law, the number of screenings will increase to 60 and funding for this newborn screening will increase by over **\$1.6 million**.

Increasing Funding for Compassionate Care: Governor Christie has taken a responsible approach to administering medical marijuana for select New Jerseyans. Following the opening of the first medical marijuana dispensary, the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget proposal increases funding by **\$823,000**.

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