



May 8, 2013

Board Members
Connect for Health Colorado
3773 Cherry Creek Dr. North
Denver, CO

Dear Board Members:

Peak Vista Community Health Centers submitted an application to build the Assistance Network in the Pikes Peak region, including El Paso, Teller, Park and Elbert counties. In formulating the plan, we were very cognizant of the challenges of starting a new program that would efficiently and effectively reach our uninsured population. We know that a strong foundation will “make or break” Colorado’s efforts to establish a Health Benefits Exchange. Now we hear that the budget request to the Department of Health and Human Services may be half that indicated in the original announcement.

We urge you to consider the ramifications of underfunding this crucial service and risking the confidence of consumers. A variety of activities and strategies to identify and assist families in finding the right health coverage option for them will be needed. In our application we cited new research by *Enroll America* which found that 75% of newly-eligible people want in-person assistance to learn about and enroll in health insurance coverage. To them, “knowledge, security, confidence and reassurance” are the advantages of in-person assistance. Around 50% of those interviewed said that finding health insurance is too important to do on-line.

Ensuring sufficient funding for Connect for Health Colorado is vital so that we can build a strong foundation to increase access, affordability and choice for uninsured Coloradoans. In fact, 20% of our request is for one-time start-up costs to build our infrastructure. Colorado should take this opportunity to maintain or increase the proposed \$125 million level of funding to ensure a robust health insurance marketplace for consumers. Please don’t hesitate to contact me for further comments: Kandi.buckland@peakvista.org or 719-344-6186. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kandi Buckland".

Kandi Buckland
Vice President of Operations