

To Whom It May Concern,

In late 2013 Ohio made the wise decision to extend Medicaid health insurance coverage to some of our most vulnerable citizens. For the sake of those individuals and our community, Ohio needs to continue extended Medicaid.

There are many good things that extended Medicaid is doing for Ohio, but I want to focus on what it does for healthcare access in our community. Operating in a small Appalachian community, our hospital takes great pride in being able to serve the poor and afflicted. Extended Medicaid has allowed us to serve more individuals, diagnose diseases sooner, and begin building the foundation of a healthier community.

Increased access to primary and preventative care helps us in many cases see patients earlier and more frequently. Increased access helps patients identify health issues sooner and avoid more costly procedures and treatments later. Access to quality healthcare, as a result of Medicaid extension, works to help transform how individuals use our healthcare system.

While there may be much left to do to improve our healthcare system, extended Medicaid was and is a significant step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

**Kenneth Cochran, RN, FACHE**  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*  
River Valley Health Partners  
425 West Fifth Street  
East Liverpool, OH 43920