Dear Lawmaker:

to urge you, your colleagues, and Governor Corbett to expand Medicaid while also protecting current beneficiaries and their coverage.

On February 19th, the Department of Public Welfare submitted Healthy Pennsylvania. We are very concerned about the impact of this proposal on Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens.

Healthy PA slashes benefits for current Medicaid recipients.

Pregnant women, people with disabilities, and seniors who rely on Medicaid will be particularly affected. In total, 1.1 million Pennsylvania adults currently receive Medicaid and will be subjected to these new, drastic benefit limits.

For example, Medicaid beneficiaries currently fighting cancer will find it more difficult or even impossible to get the treatment they need with the new radiology limits. The Commonwealth's Medicaid package will go from no limits on durable medical equipment to either a meager $1,000 or $2,500 limit, not nearly enough for a mechanized wheelchair. *Healthy PA* also imposes limits on hospital admissions, x-rays, lab work, mental health treatment and more.

Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities must be protected.

This critically important program helps 34,000 workers with disabilities across the Commonwealth receive the care they need. Ending the program would be devastating for many MAWD recipients who would not qualify for equivalent coverage under *Healthy PA* or through Pennsylvania's Marketplace. Eliminating the program would save the Commonwealth just $17 million.

There's no need to cut benefits or programs. We save more by expanding.

Cutting benefits and eliminating MAWD would be devastating for millions of low-income Pennsylvanians, but will only save Pennsylvania a little over $17 million this year. According to Pennsylvania's own Independent Fiscal Office, we can *save over $500 million this year* by expanding coverage as offered under the Affordable Care Act.

Pennsylvania should not use Medicaid expansion waiver to slash benefits.

Should the Commonwealth seek to impose new benefit limits on existing Medicaid recipients, it should use the appropriate vehicle, which would be a separate State Plan Amendment with a distinct notice and public comment period.

Healthy PA gets rid of important rights for Medicaid beneficiaries.

Healthy PA would eliminate retroactive coverage for the newly eligible Medicaid Expansion population, a necessary feature of the Medicaid program that protects low-income Pennsylvanians from crushing medical debt and allows hospitals to recoup uncompensated care costs. This proposal also eliminates traditional Medicaid appeals rights that are required by the U.S. Constitution. And it would not provide essential wraparound services for the Medicaid expansion population, like certain family planning services or transportation to doctors' offices for people who cannot get to medical providers any other way.

Premiums in Healthy PA will hurt beneficiaries and cost Pennsylvania.

People who are very low-income (with annual incomes of less than $12,000 per year in some cases) will have an incredibly difficult time finding an extra $25 or $35 in their monthly budgets for premium payments. It will be also be logistically impossible for many of these individuals and families to pay, because very low-income people are often 'unbanked,' meaning they do not have bank accounts, credit cards, or other ways to pay their bill. We also know that premium payments are burdensome for the state to manage and process. And the *Healthy PA* premium structure is exceptionally harsh, because it does not permit premium waivers for financial hardship and it includes punitive 'lockout periods,' where an individual or family will lose coverage for up to nine months in a year if unable to pay.

Hundreds of thousands of people are stuck in the gap.

Hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians are stuck in the *Pennsylvania Gap* and are unable to get coverage until the Commonwealth expands Medicaid. Over 60,000 of these individuals are veterans that have served our country, hundreds of thousands more are working moms and dads. According to the most recent census, 75% of the folks who fall into the *Pennsylvania Gap* have at least one full time worker in their household.

Shelagh Collins is an exception to the rule. She is an unemployed worker from Pittsburgh and is caught in our state's disgraceful gap. She came to the Capitol on Monday to tell her story.

So did Carmela Green. Carmela is a home health aid from Williamsport. She makes too little to qualify for subsidies, but too much to qualify for Pennsylvania's current Medicaid program. She's stuck in the *Pennsylvania Gap* with hundreds of thousands of other workers including many of her colleagues.

Medicaid Expansion remains best option.

Medicaid Expansion is an incredible opportunity to provide coverage to hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians. Every independent fiscal study that has been conducted on this, including one done by Pennsylvania's own Independent Fiscal Office, has concluded that it is also a smart fiscal move. Cover the Commonwealth still favors a straightforward Medicaid expansion as offered by the Affordable Care Act. Still, we recognize the importance of working together to ensure coverage for working moms and dads, veterans and other Pennsylvanians falling into this ever-growing gap. Medicaid Expansion coverage, however, should not be linked to dangerous benefit cuts, the loss of federal Medicaid protections, or the imposition of burdensome premiums.

Lawmakers must stand up for Medicaid.

The Cover the Commonwealth Campaign is urging you to protect Medicaid coverage in Pennsylvania. Medicaid is an efficient program that is a critical safety net for over a million of our seniors, people with disabilities, and children. Vote against cuts to Medicaid.

If you would also like to submit comments to CMS, the Cover the Commonwealth Campaign can help you with resources and sample comments. Please contact Antoinette Kraus akraus@pahealthaccess.org.