



As 2017 moves ahead, we are now hearing worrisome messages and rhetoric about the future of health care for many millions of Americans. We are aware that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 came with many unexpected flaws: rising premiums, increased deductibles, and a shortage of providers willing to accept subsidized insurance plans. However, many of these problems preceded the arrival of the ACA such as sharply rising prescription drug costs. Yes. Improvements are crucial to strengthen the ACA and to fix longstanding pre-existing problems within the profit-driven corners of the health care system.

For many millions however, ACA has been literally life-saving. At Community Health Programs we see the impact of greater access to health insurance every day at our nine health care centers throughout the Berkshires—this impact is one reason we received a \$1 million grant to fund expansion of our CHP Lee Family Practice.

In the CHP health network – and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) nationwide - we have never turned away patients at the door. We never will.

FQHCs began as a community health civil rights issue in the 1960s, and there are now more than 1,100 nationwide providing care to 25 million Americans. In 2017, we expect to serve more than 23,000 Berkshire County residents with our health care and family services programs, and regardless of ACA’s future, our doors will remain open to all, regardless of ability to pay or any other demographic, political or economic factors.

One cornerstone of improving care and curbing costs is Patient-Centered Medical Home,™ a national program emphasizing coordinated, team-based care. This team approach is intended to improve patient health, reduce costs, and improve access to mental health services, if needed. CHP Lee Family Practice has just been recertified as a PCMH; CHP Neighborhood Health Center and CHP Great Barrington are also certified.

We will be here to provide care to all. We will continue adopting best practices to benefit our patients and staff. We will continue to recruit physicians, nurse practitioners and others who are committed to the unique mission of community health centers. We hope you will continue to partner with us in our efforts.

Lia Spiliotes

Lia Spiliotes is CEO of CHP

