

Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee
Testimony of Lower Lights Christian Health Center • Patient Engagement
Presented by Dr. Dana Vallangeon, CEO • May 21, 2015

Chairwoman Sears, Vice-Chair Burke, & Members of the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee,

Good morning, I'm Dr. Dana Vallangeon, CEO of Lower Lights Christian Health Center (LLCHC). We are a nonprofit faith-based **f**ederally **q**ualified **h**ealth **c**enter with sites in Franklinton/Columbus as well as Marysville. Our mission is to minister the love of Christ as a model full-service medical home, focused on whole-person wellness, available to all in Central Ohio who need it, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

Patients who come to LLCHC are treated with respect and dignity. We are continually adapting and meeting the needs for all ages. We offer services to care for the body, mind and soul including sick and preventative care, chronic disease management, physicals, cancer screenings, well baby care and immunizations, pharmacy services, nutritional services, case management, oral and behavioral health services plus patient advocacy – just to name a few. We measure excellence in our quality of service, reflecting professional and continuous improvement, to achieve the best outcomes. As a practicing physician for the Health Center and the CEO since its inception in 2002, I have a unique perspective and direct impact on delivering high-quality care and integrating it with our values and mission.

I am also a member of the Executive Committee for the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers, which represents all of Ohio's Federally Qualified Health Centers, more commonly referred to as Community Health Centers. For over 50 years, Community Health Centers have offered an innovative model of care that sets us apart from other primary care providers. We reduce or eliminate barriers to accessing care and health disparities, improve health, and lower health system costs – while allowing communities to actively lead in the direction of their own care.

Health Centers like LLCHC offer a patient-centered medical home while also providing other support services like transportation, translation, insurance enrollment, case management and health education. In addition to bundling all of these comprehensive services often times under one roof, we also offer extended hours of operation and open access scheduling to allow for same day appointments by our patients. These strategies increase the likelihood of receiving the right kind of care at the right time and in the most appropriate cost-effective setting. This comprehensive holistic approach allows us to reach, inspire, and teach our patient populations resulting in higher rates of patient understanding and compliance.

A cornerstone of our success is **consumer engagement**. As I mentioned, we believe that **faith** is a dimension of health. At Lower Lights Christian Health Center, we believe it is critical to provide care for the whole person. Our spiritual care program consists of an on-staff chaplain and volunteer spiritual care providers, both clergy and lay persons, who give two to three hours per week to minister to LLCHC patients by encouraging, listening, and praying with them.

In the last couple of years, we have developed and executed a plan to place a LLCHC employee, one of patient navigators, at the nearby Emergency Department who can either divert patients presenting for non-emergency needs to LLCHC, or connect them to our Health Center for follow-up and establishment as their primary care resource.

In addition, we have partnered with CareSource who in turn provides LLCHC with an onsite full-time **case manager**.

Another successful program we run is our **outreach to pregnant women to help ensure we are getting them connected to care in the first trimester**. We also provide support teams for new parents.

Sometimes our patients need access to services outside of what we offer here at LLCHC. Our **Patient Advocates** are peers who are well connected to community services. They are available to meet with patients, help them find the services that they need, and navigate the system to get access to those services.

Thank you for this opportunity to share a brief overview of Lower Lights Christian Health Center and our approach to patient engagement. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.