

July 12, 2022

The Honorable Adam J. Bello
Office of the County Executive, Monroe County
110 County Office Building
39 W. Main Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear County Executive Bello:

I am writing to strongly support Lifespan of Greater Rochester's proposal to serve at-risk older adults and expand the Community Care Connections Program. This project works to address the social determinants of health so that vulnerable individuals can connect to needed benefits and other health services. Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS) has supported this program during the course of the NYS Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Program (DSRIP), as well as part of our System Transformation & Community Investment Program.

Community Care Connections integrates systems of care. It is evident that siloed care is detrimental for older patients. In 2011, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study called it "Health Care's Blind Side." The foundation concluded, "85 percent [of physicians surveyed] believe that unmet social needs—things like access to nutritious food, reliable transportation, and adequate housing—are leading directly to worse health for all Americans. This is health care's blind side: Within the current health care system, physicians do not have the time or sufficient staff support to address patients' social needs."

Since this report, a lot has been written about the social determinants of health. We know that housing, food, transportation, safe neighborhoods, etc. impact the health of an individual. For many older adults, it is daunting to navigate the social service system and health care systems of care, so they go without, and their conditions deteriorate over time. If we do not intervene, most of these individuals require more expensive long-term care alternatives.

The Community Care Connections (CCC) program has proven that integrating traditional community-based aging services with medical systems of care positively affect the cost, quality, and physician & patient satisfaction. They have hired an independent evaluator, the New York Academy of Medicine, to show that value of this service. Through this evaluation, Lifespan has

proven reduced hospitalizations, emergency room visits and observations by supporting the social needs of older adults. They have also surveyed older adults, their family caregivers, and the medical community. All three groups of individuals indicate this program is making a positive difference in the lives of the older adults.

Lifespan's Community Care Connections program is a stellar example of how connecting and integrating community services with healthcare improves health outcomes. We should expand programs that work. I offer my full support and continued assistance to Lifespan in this effort.

Sincerely,



Carol Tegas
Executive Director