



Mary's
Center

www.maryscenter.org
202.483.8196

Saving lives and creating stronger communities, one family at a time.

May 8, 2017

Commissioner Stephen Taylor
Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking
Government of the District of Columbia
810 First Street NE
Suite 701
Washington, DC

Dear Commissioner Taylor,

Mary's Center has a longstanding partnership with CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield (CareFirst), and the organization has been a key supporter of our work for the last seven years. Since 2010, Mary's Center has received a total of \$3.6 million in support from CareFirst.

CareFirst is solely responsible for enabling Mary's Center to open our Adelphi, MD site in 2012. They provided us with \$1.6 million in capital support for our expansion to this site in Prince George's County. We would not have been able to open our doors at this new location were it not for the support we received from CareFirst.

In 2012, Mary's Center set out to obtain our status as a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). CareFirst provided support for this endeavor through a \$596,664 grant that included in-kind trainings and support. The grant itself paid for the salaries of two employees, a Panel Manager and an RN Care Coordinator, whose focus was to formulate care plans for participants with hypertension, diabetes, and asthma. Additionally, CareFirst hosted monthly webinars around PCMH topics including participant education and hosted quarterly education-based meetings where grantees had the opportunity to present information about their projects or learn in-person about topics relevant to their grants. Through this grant award CareFirst went above and beyond the role of a grant maker by facilitating capacity building opportunities for their grantees. Thanks to this support, Mary's Center is now a level 2 PCMH and is in the process of applying for our level 3 status.

In 2014, while expecting to implement a plan for sustainable growth in the aftermath of the recession, Mary's Center was faced with an unexpected surge of unaccompanied minors from El Salvador fleeing violence, which resulted in \$700,000 of unplanned and unfunded care for over 700 children and teens. In keeping with Mary's Center's mission to care for all who walks through our doors, regardless of ability to pay, we did not restrict or limit care in any way. During this trying time we received a \$95,000 grant from CareFirst, which was essential in keeping our doors open to the hundreds of youth seeking care from our health centers.

CareFirst also embarked on a multi-year partnership with Mary's Center to support the expansion of our Maternal and Child Health Care program to our Georgia Avenue and Adelphi sites. We received \$376,693 from CareFirst to provide prenatal services to 5,400 women and to expand our Centering Pregnancy program to include up to 470 women at both locations over the duration of the three year partnership. The support we received from CareFirst enabled us to evaluate the overall effectiveness of



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our prenatal care program and how Centering Pregnancy complements the individualized care offered to women.

The importance of this program is exemplified through the experience of one of our participants, Linda (named changed at the request of the participant). Linda emigrated from Honduras, where she had been kidnapped by a gang and was held in a house thousands of miles from where she lived. She managed to escape, made her way to the United States and settled in Prince George's County, Maryland. During her initial visit to Mary's Center, Linda revealed that her pregnancy was the result of rape, a traumatic experience she endured on a daily basis while being held captive. Our team worked to orient her to our programs, she slowly opened up and was receptive to our services. Linda has since given birth to her child, whom she refers to as her "miracle baby." Linda has also been reunited with her parents. Both parents are receiving services from Mary's Center, through which her mother learned she was battling a very serious illness. Linda told us that receiving health services at Mary's Center helped to raise her self-esteem, and as she continues to get on solid ground she hopes to pay it forward by helping others who have gone through similar situations.

In summation, our partnership with CareFirst has been invaluable over the years, and will continue to be instrumental as Mary's Center expands our services over the coming year.

Thank you,

Maria Gomez

CEO, Mary's Center