



April 6, 2022

The Honorable David Bentz
Chair, House and Human Development Committee
Delaware General Assembly
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

Re: Senate Substitute 2 for Senate Bill 1- Healthy Delaware Families Act

Dear Representative Bentz,

On behalf of ChristianaCare, I am writing to express our full support for SS 2 for SB 1, otherwise known as the Healthy Delaware Families Act. If passed, this bill will create a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program in Delaware. As an organization we believe in the positive clinical and public health benefits this bill will have for Delaware families, and the positive effect this legislation will have on attracting and supporting the workforce that provides high quality health care services to all Delawareans.

At ChristianaCare, we strongly believe that having a healthy Delaware means having healthy families. The Healthy Delaware Families Act helps accomplish that goal. As a leading birthing hospital and one of the first organizations in Delaware to offer paid family leave, we are entirely supportive of the positive impacts this benefit has on our caregivers and their children. The research is clear; paid family leave gives parents time to bond with a new child, increases the duration of breastfeeding post birth, and reduces infant hospitalizations.

This legislation will benefit the health and well-being of all Delawareans, while advancing health equity for those Delawareans who need it most. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), 34% of U.S. workers in the highest wage brackets have access to paid leave through their employers compared to just 7% in the lowest wage bracket. The RWJF also noted that paid family leave reduces rates of food insecurity in the year following birth, increases parity in the duration of leave taken between white women and women of color, and improves the physical and mental health of new mothers, especially single mothers, and those with lower incomes.

Similarly, access to paid medical leave is not as accessible for lower-wage workers and those in underserved communities, especially those who are Black and LatinX/Hispanic. Delawareans in these communities often struggle with chronic health issues and health inequities at a higher rate than other populations. This legislation will help reduce those inequities and enable those

workers to take care of their health conditions more appropriately, seek access to care, and provide aid as a caregiver to family members in need.

There is little doubt that providing paid family and medical leave will make Delawareans healthier. We are proud to support SS 2 for SB 1 and believe it is a strong next step to improving the health of Delaware families, supporting and attracting health care workers, and making health access broader and more equitable. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and your commitment to Delaware families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bettina T. Riveros', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bettina Tweardy Riveros
Chief Health Equity Officer
Senior Vice President Government Affairs and Community Engagement
ChristianaCare