

RE: Restore Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Councils' (PHC4) budget to the \$2.71 million proposed in the Governor's budget.

I am writing to ask your support in restoring the 10% funding cut to PHC4 in the House GOP budget.

SMC Business Councils, a non-profit trade association serving small businesses in southwest and central Pennsylvania, has several thousand members in service, manufacturing, and commercial companies. Our recent survey identified the high cost of health care as members' top challenge.

If lawmakers want to grow small business in Pennsylvania the high costs of health care must be addressed. PHC4 is the one agency in the Commonwealth positioned to restrain the cost of health care.

One of the ways to keep health care costs down for small businesses is through the use of consumer-directed high deductible plans. Those plans rely on access to price and quality information. Prices and quality information are available for just about every purchase we make except for health care services.

Thanks to PHC4's new interactive database small businesses and their employees now for the first time have a tool to get the most out of their health spending accounts. PHC4's website of Medicare payments for common services and treatments like MRIs and mammograms assists consumers by providing real payment information. The database has the potential of becoming a very sophisticated tool in the battle to control health care costs.

SMC requests the restoration of PHC4's budget to the \$2.71 million proposed in the Governor's budget. PHC4 is only a staff of 27. The new interactive database will disappear and along with it will go one means by which small businesses can control health care costs.

Sincerely,

Eileen Anderson
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