



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1900 KANAWHA BOULEVARD, EAST
CHARLESTON, WV 25305
(304) 558-2000

March 31, 2014

EARL RAY TOMBLIN
GOVERNOR

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

I have been advised of a recent change in which the structure of the Department of Health and Human Services Administration Black Lung Clinic program now limits awards to \$900,000 per grantee. This capping structure will place the health of West Virginia coal miners already suffering from this devastating disease at further risk, and place a great burden on our state to find alternative funding sources to provide these vital services to all who need them.

In previous years, grants have been awarded to applicants based on verifiable need. Last year, nearly 8,500 West Virginians suffering from Black Lung disease were provided critical services under the auspices of the \$1.4 million grant from HRSA. Services were provided through the funding of eight clinics across the state, documenting more than 52,000 encounters with these patients.

Because of the high incidence of black lung in West Virginia, we were the only state whose grant exceeded \$900,000 last year. Therefore, this new funding formula has the potential to impact only West Virginia in a negative way.

I respectfully ask for your reconsideration and request removal of the capped restrictions for grant applications or allow for a supplemental request to maintain the standards of care and service in our black lung clinics. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Earl Ray Tomblin".

Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor