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May 29, 2012

Denise W. Rivers
Lt. Governor's Office on Aging
Deputy Director of Aging Services
1301 Gervais Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Ms. Rivers:

On behalf of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Health Services, I am pleased to write this letter of commitment to continue our partnership with the S.C. Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging (LGOA) through the funding opportunity "Empowering Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities through Chronic Disease Self-Management Education Programs" of the U.S. Administration on Aging.

DHEC and LGOA have a long history of collaboration, culminating in a number of grant awards for evidence-based initiatives. Since 2006, LGOA and DHEC have provided joint leadership to improve quality of life of older adults and disabled persons in South Carolina through evidence-based prevention efforts. DHEC has successfully collaborated with LGOA and the Aging Network to build an infrastructure for providing evidence-based prevention programs, such as the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) and the Arthritis Self-Management Program (ASMP). Over the course of the various projects from 2006 to the present, self-management workshops have been offered in all ten of the Area Agencies on Aging; and seven areas offer workshops regularly. Statewide accessibility to self-management education programs is critical to reduce the considerable burden and impact of chronic diseases in our state and to achieve health equity.

The Health Services Deputy area is the largest within DHEC, with 2,219 employees, 8 public health regions that serve all 46 counties of the state, 5 central office bureaus, and 6 professional offices. We are fully committed to working with LGOA and our many other partners to assure the success of this initiative. Cora Plass, Director of the Healthy Aging Program and Manager of the Arthritis Program, will serve as the Co-Lead. Ms. Plass will continue to assist in integrating efforts throughout Health Services, including coordinating with other Chronic Disease Programs, the STD/HIV/AIDS Division, and the eight Public Health Regions.

This funding will strengthen our relationship with public health and aging working in unison throughout the state to deploy the programs. Our integrative approach will create more efficient utilization of valuable state resources and will help build public/private partnerships that can embed and sustain the programs.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

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We welcome this opportunity to join with LGOA to continue to provide leadership in the delivery of chronic disease self-management education programs in South Carolina to reduce the burden and the impact of chronic diseases in our state and to help older adults have more years of quality life.

Sincerely,



Lisa Waddell, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Director
Health Services