



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

March 22, 2013

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

I appreciated the opportunity to speak with you on March 13, 2013, about your concerns regarding implementation of the federal Basic Health Plan Option (FBHPO). I would like to provide more clarity on the agency's commitment to implementing the program in 2015.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will issue proposed rules for the FBHPO for public comment in 2013, and will issue final rules in the first quarter of 2014. In addition, CMS will ensure that the FBHPO is fully-operational off state exchanges for states in 2015, including the funding based on the 95 percent estimated tax credits and cost sharing reductions for eligible individuals, per section 1331 of the Affordable Care Act. We will issue a timeline detailing the dates for guidance forthcoming in 2013 no later than April 15, 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Sebelius". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Kathleen Sebelius