



COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS, INC.

April 23, 2013

Finance Committee
c/o Bob Nason, Town Manager
Town of Lee
32 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

Dear Esteemed Members of the Finance Committee,

Community Health Programs (CHP) respectfully adjusts our request of \$5,000 from the Town of Lee through its appropriations process for FY14 to \$1,000. This \$1,000 in funding will support CHP services that will be provided to Lee citizens between July 2013 and June 2014.

CHP serves Lee residents in critical ways that ensure the health and well being of more than two thousand residents—about 35% of the overall population. Now that **Lee Family Practice** is part of CHP, the organization is the primary health care provider for more than 1600 residents—ensuring that with or without insurance, town residents have access to high quality medical care. CHP protected every job at Lee Family Practice, which employs 17 people.

Every week, **CHP's WIC program** comes to Lee to make it easier for Lee residents to access to this maternal/child health program. In 2012, CHP's WIC program worked with 193 pregnant women, new mothers, and children under the age of five—all from Lee. CHP's WIC staff promotes healthy pregnancies, infant/toddler nutrition, childhood immunization, and makes sure that no child goes hungry. By providing access to healthy food and nutrition counseling, CHP's WIC ensures that children's bodies grow up healthy and that their brains develop fully.

CHP's First Steps helps children under the age of three who are born prematurely, are slow to speak, have severe hearing loss, are slow to walk, or don't connect socially. CHP professionals work with each child so he or she can develop the skills they need to thrive in pre-school and all aspects of their lives. Seven Lee children were helped this year—several of them in their own homes. This care is provided regardless of the family's ability to pay. This work often means that when these children enter school, they don't need Individual Education Plans, thus saving the Town money for the child's entire time in the public school system—never mind the positive impact on the child who can start school without being burdened by a medical diagnosis.

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www.communityhealthprograms.org

CHP's Monday morning **playgroups** at the Lee Youth Association give small children the chance to engage in educational, physical, and creative play while their parents learn about other resources to help them become more confident as parents. This is another program offered at no cost.

The need for these services continues to grow as the economic choices available to town families remain limited. While I understand that these same pressures are impacting the Town budget for FY13, I know that throughout the year CHP ensures that Lee residents receive the food, support, and assistance that reduce the demand for other town services. CHP serves Lee in many ways and will do even more in the coming year, now that Lee Family Practice is part of CHP.

CHP receives annual support from the following towns:

Alford, \$800

Egremont, \$1,000

Great Barrington, \$3500 currently

New Marlborough, \$1,000

Otis, \$1,000

Sandisfield, \$1,000

These are difficult times and difficult decisions must be made, but I hope that you will allocate \$5,000 to CHP as a small investment that will bring many rewards to the residents of Lee, not the least of which is ensuring that the youngest town residents have ample food and that youngsters who need intensive and effective help from trained professionals in order to thrive get this help early when it is most effective and well before the child is entering kindergarten.

If you have any questions or require additional information, you can contact me at 413-528-9311 x1166 or bayars@chpberkshires.org. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Bryan Ayars
Chief Executive Officer

Att.