

July 22, 2013

To the Honorable Members of the 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

Today, I sign Senate Bill 26. In my State of the State address I called for the General Assembly to increase access to health care by authorizing the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to implement the Affordable Care Act provisions creating a new eligibility category for Medicaid. This bill achieves that goal, providing hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans with needed access to health coverage and bringing billions of dollars in federal funds into our State.

This bill also includes a series of changes to the Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Act of 2011. During the weeks this bill has been under review, I have heard from numerous stakeholders with concerns about these changes and the implications for the State's rebalancing efforts.

I am committed to making sure all Illinois citizens, including those with physical, mental health or developmental disabilities, have the opportunity to meet their full potential. Soon after taking office, I settled three class action *Olmstead* lawsuits, agreeing to move individuals out of private nursing facilities into community-based care. I have closed outdated state institutions and invested in community-based settings. I also recently signed Employment First legislation to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

My staff will work with the General Assembly and stakeholders to ensure that the rules implementing the provisions of this bill that expand the role of Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Facilities (SMHRFs) do not undermine the state's compliance with the *Olmstead* consent decrees or overall rebalancing goals. It is my intent to pursue follow-up legislation to address any problems that arise in advancing these goals as the law is implemented.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN  
Governor