



**Pennsylvania Department of Health
2012-2013 Budget, Opening Remarks
House Appropriations Committee
Dr. Eli N. Avila, MD, JD, MPH, FCLM, Secretary of Health
*February 29, 2012***

Good afternoon, I want to thank Chairman Adolph, Chairman Markosek and the Committee for the invitation to speak to you today regarding the Department of Health's portion of the Governor's proposed 2012-13 budget.

I would like to share with you some highlights of our accomplishments since we held budget discussions last year.

- **Vital Records:** You asked for improvements to our Vital Records processing of birth and death certificates. While we still have room for improvement, I am proud to report that we've cut in half the processing times. With the signing of Act 62 of 2011, we've allowed for a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth. On February 13, 2012 we began providing access to more records for genealogical research as a result of Act 110 of 2011. And, we recently moved our Harrisburg Public Office to provide more access to parking and complementary services offered through the Social Security office. We are continuing to look at ways to maximize the use of technology and create a better customer service experience for Pennsylvanians who need access to vital records.
- **HIV testing:** I would like to thank the PA General Assembly for the passing of Act 59 of 2011 and as a result, we anticipate more HIV screening will be conducted, which we hope will assist in detection and slow the spread of the disease.
- **Quality Assurance:** For the first time since the 1980s, we are working with stakeholders to do a thorough review of our hospital regulations, with an eye toward making improvements and accounting for technological advancements that will continue to assist us in protecting Pennsylvania's health and safety.

I hope you'll agree that this is a strong budget, focused on putting Pennsylvania back on the path to prosperity. This budget supports the programs that help our neediest citizens, provides for the health and safety of all citizens while making the tough choices to make government smarter, more efficient and more effective.