New Ad from Disability and Aging Groups Urges Congress Not to Cut Medicaid

“Don’t Cut My Lifeline” is National Call to Retain Funding for Threatened Programs

Washington, D.C. (July 15, 2011) – A two-page ad released in yesterday’s issue of Roll Call, a Capitol Hill newspaper, highlights the need to retain funding in Medicaid for the nation’s most vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities.

The ad was signed by 179 leading aging and disability groups from around the country, including the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). According to the ad, more than a quarter of all seniors and people with disabilities depend on Medicaid, and cutting the program could deny millions the choice to receive the services they need to live independently in their homes and communities. In addition, these cuts could cost thousands of direct-care jobs, putting a greater burden on individuals and families.

“Our nation’s current economic situation demands leadership as well as thoughtful and balanced action,” stated AUCD’s president Daniel Crimmins, Ph.D. “Taking health and long term care away from millions of America’s children, seniors, and people with disabilities is neither. For decades, Congress has taken important steps to secure the rights of citizens to live the American dream - to fulfill their academic potential, engage in productive employment, participate in civic life and enjoy
full inclusion in society. All of these are premised on good health. While capping Medicaid through the use of block grants or restructuring the Federal-state partnership match system through which states receive reimbursement for services may seem like a logical cost-saving mechanism, this approach is far more likely to shift the cost of services to already cash strapped states. This, in turn, will leave states with three unpleasant choices - sharply restricting enrollment, eliminating benefits, or raising taxes to pay for the program. Any changes to Medicaid must recognize the unique populations enrolled in the program and the essential role it plays in providing health care and long-term services for millions of Americans. Legislators must consider the consequences that budget negotiations have on the poorest and most vulnerable Americans and their families.

AUCD is a national network of 67 University Centers for Excellence (UCEDD); 39 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs; and 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC). For more information and a national directory of Centers, see AUCD’s website at www.aucd.org.

To view the Roll Call Ad, please click here.

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