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## For Immediate Release

# West Virginia Citizen Action Urges Governor Tomblin to Mark Medicare and Medicaid's 47th Anniversary by Providing More West Virginians with Health Security through Medicaid.

*Medicaid Provides Thousands of Jobs in the Health and Long-Term Care Sector and Supports Rural Economies*

Charleston, WV - Medicare and Medicaid were signed into law today in 1956 to make sure that working people, children, seniors, and people with disabilities could get the healthcare they need throughout their lives. It is this record of success that we should be building upon and expanding.

**According to the WV Center on Budget and Policy, the majority of Medicaid spending is for seniors, and people with disabilities.** Additionally, the health care sector employs about 112,800 people in West Virginia, or 14.5 percent of the state's workers, more than mining, logging, manufacturing, and construction combined.

Gary Zuckett, Executive Director of West Virginia Citizen Action stated, "On this 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these two life-giving programs, it's hard to imagine what it was like before they were created. Medicaid pays for the majority of nursing home beds for our elderly. Medicare provides seniors with essential medical services. Medicaid also serves needy children and citizens with disabilities. Yet there are those who would tear these two pillars of our health system down, privatize them for profit, or do away with them altogether. Have they no heart or conscience?"

**Cuts in federal funding to Medicaid and Medicare, like the ones proposed by House Republicans in this year's Ryan/Romney budget won't reduce the cost of healthcare.** Instead, they just shift the cost from the federal government to states and families that can't afford them and leave the middle class holding the bag once more.

"Our governor should look closely at the benefits to both citizens and the state's economy of bringing in additional hundreds of millions in federal Medicaid funding to cover additional lives and boost our state's economy through the new jobs created in the medical service sector," Zuckett added.

Medicare has been shown to be the best way to provide seniors and people with disabilities with affordable health care they can count on. Because of its concentrated purchasing power, Medicare controls costs better than private insurance companies. Additionally, Medicare's administrative costs are a mere fraction of the bloated private market that pays multi-million dollar CEO salaries.

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