



MASSACHUSETTS
MEDICAL SOCIETY



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CONTACTS:
Catherine Bromberg
781-262-6027// 617-331-2044 (mobile)
Jeff Hall
617-284-1102// 617-281-8384 (mobile)

MEDIA ADVISORY:

Hospitals, Healthcare Workers and Patient Advocates Unite to Oppose Proposed Federal Funding Cuts Massachusetts Hospital Association, 1199SEIU, Health Care for All and Other Stakeholders Hold Joint Event

BOSTON – Leaders from across the Massachusetts healthcare spectrum joined together today to oppose proposed Medicare and Medicaid funding cuts Congress is now considering as part of an agreement on national debt reduction. The **Massachusetts Hospital Association (MHA)**, **1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East**, the **Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS)**, and patient advocacy group **Health Care for All** joined representatives from the **Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH)**, **Massachusetts Council of Community Hospitals**, **Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers**, **Massachusetts Senior Care Association**, **Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts**, **Massachusetts Behavioral Health Association**, the **Massachusetts Senior Care Association**, **Association for Behavioral Healthcare**, **Massachusetts Psychiatric Society**, the **Organization of Nurse Leaders of MA-RI** and the **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO)** at a press conference on the State House steps to sound the alarm on the serious unintended consequences such cuts would create for patients, caregivers and employees.

“The formula-driven, arbitrary budget targets that have been set out as potential elements of an agreement to reduce the national debt and increase the debt ceiling would result in across-the-board cuts to healthcare,” said Veronica Turner, Executive Vice President of 1199SEIU. “Such cuts would be bad for care, bad for jobs, and bad for the overall economy.”

Lynn Nicholas, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Hospital Association (MHA), echoed Turner’s concerns in her remarks at the State House event. “Massachusetts hospitals are fully supportive of healthcare reform – including the reduction of costs where possible – as called for by both the Affordable Care Act and several of the state’s recent reform laws,” Nicholas added. “In fact, hospitals both here and across the country have made great progress in controlling costs and improving quality. But these proposed cuts would seriously damage the overall fiscal health of our hospitals, threaten access to care and well-paying jobs, and severely limit hospitals’ ability to provide training for the physicians of the future.”

(MORE)

In Massachusetts, hospitals have reduced their anticipated healthcare cost increases by \$3.1 billion in 2009 and 2010. Yet healthcare providers continue to be challenged by ongoing government underpayment for care provided through Medicare and Medicaid, and by increased administrative burdens the state Medicaid program now places on caregivers.

“The health of over one million Medicaid recipients in Massachusetts should not be a political bargaining chip,” said Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, executive director of Health Care for All. “We call on Congress and the President to show leadership by protecting this vital program in these challenging economic times.”

“Medicare and Medicaid are the cornerstones of our health care system,” added Lynda M. Young, MD, President of the Massachusetts Medical Society. “We cannot support cuts that would undermine our patients’ well-being.”

"Federal cuts of this magnitude to the state’s Medicaid program would decimate our progress in providing Massachusetts residents with quality affordable healthcare coverage. This is a tragedy we cannot abide," said the Rev. Hurmon Hamilton, Pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church and President of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.

Cuts to hospitals impede patient access to care in their communities. Hospitals alone are currently absorbing \$155 billion in cuts over the next several years. Continued advances in healthcare payment and delivery reform, including access to high quality and affordable care, are greatly dependent on hospitals’ ability to invest in resources such as workforce and health information technology; these efforts are greatly endangered by the proposed federal funding cuts.

The proposed cuts include deep reductions to hospital Medicare reimbursement, Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding, Medicare DSH funding, and eliminating or capping Medicaid provider taxes. All such funding is critical to the life-saving missions of Massachusetts hospitals and to our state’s coverage expansions.

Medicaid cuts would greatly impede the success we’ve made in covering 98% of Massachusetts residents.

Details of Press Event

WHO: **Massachusetts Hospital Association**
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
Health Care for All
Massachusetts Medical Society
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals
Massachusetts Council of Community Hospitals
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Senior Care Association
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Behavioral Health Association
Association for Behavioral Healthcare,
Massachusetts Psychiatric Society
Organization of Nurse Leaders of MA-RI

WHAT: Press conference in opposition to proposed federal Medicare/Medicaid cuts being proposed as part of national debt negotiations.

WHEN: Thursday, July 14
11 a.m.

WHERE: Massachusetts State House
Beacon Street, Boston, MA

CONTACTS: **Catherine Bromberg (MHA)** **Jeff Hall (1199SEIU)**
781-262-6027// 617-331-2044 (m) 617-284-1102// 617-281-8384 (m)

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