

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
of
AGING ORGANIZATIONS

Barbara Kennelly, Chair

Statement by Chair of LCAO on Medicaid Commission Meeting

At this first meeting of the Medicaid Commission, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations has concerns that there are only 36 days remaining before it must report its proposal for \$10 billion in Medicaid cuts. Medicaid is the essential safety net program for seniors who rely on it for their health and long term care support and services. And while we represent the aging community, it is important to note that Medicaid is a cross-generation program, and is the source of health care to about 52 million Americans of all ages.

Our concerns are two-fold. First, that while the congressional budget resolution does not require Medicaid cuts of \$10 billion, the Medicaid Commission, meeting today for the first time, is explicitly charged with finding these cuts in slightly over a month—a daunting task. Sound policy must drive any such deliberations; but this is a case where an arbitrary budget target and an artificially expedited time frame—rather than policy—will make the decisions that affect everyone who relies on Medicaid.

Secondly, we are concerned that, despite the importance of Medicaid for seniors, there is no senior representation on the Medicaid Commission, voting or non-voting. It is unclear that the unique needs of seniors will be adequately and fairly represented on this Commission.

Medicaid provides vital health and long term care to our nation's seniors. They deserve to have a voice on the Commission, and for this program's future to be fairly and adequately examined. The Medicaid Commission meeting today accomplished neither of these goals.