



James Firman, Chair

Statement from the Leadership Council on Aging Organizations on Senate Consideration of Legislation to Repeal the Affordable Care Act

Arlington, VA (*July 27, 2017*) – The following is a statement of James Firman, Chair of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) on Senate consideration of legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA):

“On behalf of the 70 members of the LCAO, and the tens of millions of older Americans we represent, we urge members of the Senate to oppose the final proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act that will soon be considered. While legislative text has not been released, reports indicate that the final bill will be a “skinny” repeal package which includes repeal of the individual and employer mandates.

“This will lead to more than 15 million Americans losing health insurance next year, and an estimated 20% increase in individual market premiums. Repealing the mandate to buy health insurance will increase uncertainty and instability, and accelerate health plans leaving the individual market. Young and healthy people will drop coverage, driving up costs for older Americans and those with pre-existing conditions.

“Senate leadership have also made it clear that the “skinny” repeal would continue to seriously threaten Medicaid in conference negotiations with the House, which capped and cut Medicaid by over \$800 billion and eliminated the expansion. We take seriously Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn’s recent statement that they will “address the Medicaid issue when we conference with the House” and will “use the template of the House bill.” Approximately 7 million vulnerable seniors rely on Medicaid, many for long-term home care services and supports and nursing home care. The House bill also increased the number of Americans without insurance coverage by 23 million, weakened Medicare’s finances, and imposed a harsh “age tax” on pre-Medicare older adults.

“National groups representing not only seniors, but people with disabilities, children, doctors, hospitals, health plans and insurers, other provider and patient groups, and both Republican and Democratic governors agree that senators should oppose passage of the ACA repeal bill under consideration.

“We urge the Senate and House to commit to a bipartisan, open process with committee hearings and real stakeholder input, as Senator John McCain most recently urged. We stand ready and willing to work with the House and Senate to craft and pass effective, responsible solutions that improve health insurance coverage and reduce out-of-pocket costs, not eliminate coverage and increase costs.”