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Relaxing Medicaid Maintenance Requirements Would Create Barrier to Coverage for Patients with Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Stroke

Statement of American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association

WASHINGTON, D.C. – May 11, 2011 – The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association are jointly calling on Congress to oppose the State Flexibility Act, a bill that would reverse current law and allow states to tighten Medicaid eligibility before health benefit exchanges are created in 2014. The “Maintenance of Effort” (MOE) provision was first included in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and renewed in the Affordable Care Act to prevent states from scaling back coverage for some of the sickest Americans before other coverage options became available.

A statement from the three patient groups follows:

“Rolling back eligibility in Medicaid would create barriers to coverage for many of the 8.8 million low-income people with disabilities and severe chronic illnesses including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke who don’t have alternate options for adequate and affordable insurance. Taking away access to Medicaid will create barriers to important preventive care, lead to poorer outcomes and greater likelihood of death from these diseases. While we understand the difficult financial situation many states face, reducing coverage for low-income patients with chronic diseases as a way to offset a strained budget is a short-sighted approach that will lead to a sicker population and greater health care costs in the future. On behalf of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke patients across the country, we call on lawmakers to oppose any efforts to restrict access to care for America’s poorest and sickest patients.”

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

The American Diabetes Association is leading the fight to stop diabetes and its deadly consequences and fighting for those affected by diabetes. The Association funds research to prevent, cure and manage diabetes; delivers services to hundreds of communities; provides objective and credible information; and gives voice to those denied their rights because of diabetes. Founded in 1940, our mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. For more information please call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit www.diabetes.org.

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country.

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