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Contact:

Justice in Aging – Vanessa Barrington: 510-256-1200, vbarrington@justiceinaging.org

Justice in Aging Statement on the American Health Care Act

Washington, DC (March 8, 2017) – *This statement is from Kevin Prindiville, Executive Director at Justice in Aging, on the American Health Care Act:*

“Republican lawmakers in the House have drafted an ACA replacement bill, the American Healthcare Act (AHCA), that is an attack on the health and long-term care needs of older adults. This bill makes health care more expensive, targeting older adults for the deepest cuts in services and the largest increases in cost.”

“We are particularly opposed to the Medicaid cuts at the heart of this bill. The bill fundamentally changes the promise and structure of Medicaid by capping federal funding for the program at levels that, by design, will leave states without enough funds to meet the health and long-term care needs of older adults over time. Over **6 million older adults rely on Medicaid**, and **2/3 of all Medicaid spending for older adults goes to essential long term care services** in nursing homes and at home and in the community. AHCA threatens the care of all of these seniors and the peace of mind of their families.”

“In addition, AHCA makes it harder for older adults age 55-64 to access health care coverage. By freezing the Medicaid expansion, the bill takes care away from the many low-income older adults age 55-64 who rely on Medicaid to see their doctors and meet their medical needs before they qualify for Medicare. By allowing insurance companies to charge older adults more than 5 times as much for their care, the bill creates what is effectively an “age tax” that will make care for many older adults completely

unaffordable.”

“AHCA makes these cuts to the health care of older adults in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. These tax cuts will negatively impact the solvency of the Medicare trust fund, harming the Medicare program for current beneficiaries and those who will rely on it in the future.”

“The American Healthcare Act conflicts with the President’s own promises that he would not touch the safety net upon which seniors rely. Moreover, lawmakers are attempting to ram it through Congress, without hearings and without complete analysis of just how many millions of people will lose coverage under the plan.”

Justice in Aging is a national non-profit legal advocacy organization that fights senior poverty through law. Formerly the National Senior Citizens Law Center, since 1972 we’ve worked for access to affordable health care and economic security for older adults with limited resources, focusing especially on populations that have traditionally lacked legal protection such as women, people of color, LGBT individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

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Connect with Us

Justice In Aging
1444 Eye St., NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

1330 Broadway, Suite 525
Oakland, CA 94612

3660 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 718
Los Angeles, CA 90010

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