

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 25, 2013

CONTACT:

Allyson Funk

@allyfunk or @AARPmedia

202-434-2560 or media@aarp.org

AARP Ramps Up Multi-State Campaign for Medicaid Expansion

Working in More than 40 States, AARP Urges Governors and Legislators to Expand Medicaid; Access to Health Coverage for Uninsured and Unemployed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As this weekend's National Governor's Association meeting concludes, AARP is ramping up its multi-state advocacy campaign for Medicaid expansion. With the goal of helping uninsured and unemployed individuals get health coverage, the campaign spotlights challenges facing hardworking older Americans who have lost their jobs and are struggling to find new ones.

More than forty AARP state offices across the country are engaging members and volunteers, lobbying governors and legislators, running ads and working in coalitions to ensure access to health care for all Americans. In Michigan, for example, Governor Rick Snyder announced his support of Medicaid expansion at an event hosted by AARP and other health advocates. This week in Arkansas, AARP is running ads in newspapers across the state encouraging legislators to support Medicaid expansion.

"Expanding Medicaid will help millions of 45 to 64-year-olds who have lost their jobs or are struggling without health benefits, but don't currently qualify for Medicaid health coverage," said AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond.

"The Affordable Care Act expands health coverage options for all Americans. Expanding Medicaid is one critical element of the law that will give people without insurance access to preventive care and screenings that can save lives, reduce the need for expensive emergency room visits and ease hospital overcrowding," LeaMond continued. "Expanding Medicaid doesn't just help the most vulnerable; it helps keep costs down across the healthcare system."

A recent paper from AARP's Public Policy Institute examined the implications of states accepting Federal dollars and expanding Medicaid for uninsured low-income midlife adults. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of uninsured adults ages 45-64 increased from 14.2 percent to 16.3 percent; that's a 15 percent increase. The rise in unemployment and the associated lack of employer-provided health coverage left many midlife Americans looking for work and without access to health care.

The federal government will pay 100 percent of the Medicaid costs for the first three years of the expansion. So states that expand Medicaid early – beginning in 2014 – will receive greater financial advantage than those that expand in later years.

For more on AARP's Public Policy Institute paper on Medicaid expansion, visit:

<http://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/info-02-2013/after-scotus-decision-implications-of-expanding-medicare-low-income-midlife-adults-aarp-ppi-health.html>.

For more on the work AARP's state offices are doing, please contact Allyson Funk at afunk@aarp.org.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment security and retirement planning. We advocate for consumers in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP VIVA, a bilingual news source. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

###