

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Ryan Budget Pulls the Rug Out from Under Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Struggling Families

*Joint Statement of Robert Restuccia, Executive Director, Community Catalyst, and Rev. Heyward Wiggins, Co-Chair PICO National Network Steering Committee, on the House Republican budget plan*

(BOSTON AND WASHINGTON, DC) - "The House Republican 2012 budget plan released today is a blueprint for disaster. Rather than prioritizing cuts, it seeks to balance the budget on the backs of those who can least afford it – seniors, people with disabilities and struggling families – while asking too little of those who can most afford to sacrifice. Today Medicare and Medicaid work in tandem to help people stay healthy as they age, become disabled, or face hard times. Block grants, privatization and vouchers would take away the health care security that all Americans have relied on since 1965.

"As consumer and faith-based organizations representing millions of American families, we find it abhorrent that people would be made to suffer needlessly or die prematurely because they could not afford to get the care they need. The House plan to gut Medicaid and Medicare will roll back sixty years of social progress in the United States and decimate programs that are a critical part of the safety-net and the backbone of our health care system.

"Block granting Medicaid shifts costs to already financially overburdened states during this recession leads to dramatic cuts in benefits and eligibility for seniors, people with disabilities, children, pregnant women, and working parents, just when people need them most. Families that rely on Medicaid to cover long-term or nursing home care could face enormous financial strain in trying to care for loved ones when their health care costs are no longer picked up by Medicaid.

"Privatizing Medicare is a hand-out to insurance companies, driving up deductibles and co-payments for seniors on Medicare today, and doing nothing to contain health care costs. By 2021, Medicare as we know it would be gone, replaced by a voucher program that would require seniors to buy private insurance. Vouchers lead to rationed health care. As health care costs rise, vouchers would be too small to buy adequate coverage. Many seniors would find they couldn't afford coverage at all and end up uninsured.

"Instead of taking an ax to programs that provide health and economic security to millions of people, federal policy makers should build on the cost containment framework that is already part of the Affordable Care Act and focus on reducing excessive insurance premiums, giving people the care they need to stay out of hospitals and nursing homes, and investing in public health measures to reduce heart disease, diabetes and other chronic illnesses that lead to higher health care costs.

“The savings produced by the House plan come at a great human cost and take our health care system in the wrong direction. We ask Members of Congress to reject this radical proposal to take Medicaid and Medicare away from those who need it most.”

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#### About Community Catalyst

Community Catalyst is a national non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to quality affordable health care for all. Since 1997, Community Catalyst has been working to build the consumer and community leadership required to transform the American health system. With the belief that this transformation will happen when consumers are fully engaged and have an organized voice, Community Catalyst works in partnership with national, state and local consumer organizations, policymakers, and foundations, providing leadership and support to change the health care system so it serves everyone - especially vulnerable members of society. For more information, visit [www.communitycatalyst.org](http://www.communitycatalyst.org).

**PICO National Network** is a national network of faith-based community organizations working to expand health care coverage and improve communities in 17 states. [www.piconetwork.org](http://www.piconetwork.org)