

<http://rockefeller.senate.gov>
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 23, 2011

Contact: Abigail McDonough
202-224-6101

ROCKEFELLER CONCERNED ABOUT GOP BILL TO END HEALTH COVERAGE FOR MILLIONS OF CHILDREN

CBO: Under Bill, by 2013, 400,000 People would lose their Medicaid and CHIP coverage and 2/3 Would Be Children

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Jay Rockefeller today said that a Republican deficit plan to cut Medicaid and repeal maintenance-of-effort provisions from the health care reform law would also effectively eliminate the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). He vowed to fight the effort and warned that it would have a devastating effect on children.

“Republicans continue to use any excuse to attack health care reform, and Medicaid is a convenient scapegoat,” said Rockefeller. “The fact is that the health care reform law provides states with additional flexibility to improve how Medicaid services are provided, which will help states reduce Medicaid costs. We should give states an opportunity to use those new tools, before offering short-sighted proposals to repeal them outright.”

Rockefeller continued, “I’m all for having a thoughtful conversation about ways we can work with states to improve the Medicaid program for the future, but that’s not what this proposal does. Like so many other proposals regarding Medicaid, this one uses a sledgehammer instead of a scalpel. It would also effectively eliminate CHIP for millions of kids, which I strongly oppose. Instead of treating Medicaid as an afterthought, we should roll up our sleeves and talk about real solutions. A slash and burn approach is an easy way out that devalues the people who benefit from this program and the jobs that it creates.”

Recently, Rockefeller sent a letter to Senator Orrin Hatch addressing his “grave concern” about the impact of Hatch’s bill on children and other Medicaid recipients including families, seniors, pregnant women, and people who are disabled. Click [here](http://rockefeller.senate.gov/press/Rockefeller%20MOE%20to%20Hatch%2006202011.pdf) (<http://rockefeller.senate.gov/press/Rockefeller%20MOE%20to%20Hatch%2006202011.pdf>) to view the letter from Rockefeller to Hatch from June 20.

Rockefeller will also participate in a Senate Finance Committee hearing today on health care entitlement programs where he will criticize efforts to slash Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP to reduce the deficit. Instead, he will call for specific provisions that will help reduce waste in the programs, rather than cutting services for millions of struggling low-income, and middle-income Americans.

The Republican plan would repeal maintenance of effort provisions from the health care reform law that prevent states from cutting their eligibility levels for Medicaid before 2014. The bill would not help states tackle their financial problems. Instead it would cause 400,000 Americans to lose Medicaid and CHIP coverage between now and 2013. Two-thirds of those people would be children. Just two weeks ago, Rockefeller, a longtime champion of Medicaid, announced that 41 Senate Democrats stand united against any efforts to slash Medicaid in any form – whether through block grants, caps, or other methods.

###