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Bi-State Primary Care Association - Residents and State Benefit from Medicaid Expansion

CONCORD, NH – (Feb. 7, 2013) “We fully support Medicaid expansion,” stated Tess Stack Kuenning, executive director of Bi-State Primary Care Association, speaking on behalf of the 16 Community Health Centers that provide primary care to 125,000 people throughout New Hampshire. “The families who will benefit from Medicaid expansion are predominately working in retail and service industries such as child care, food service, restaurants, hotels, logging, and farming - from urban centers to rural areas across the state.”

“If New Hampshire expands Medicaid up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, the number of uninsured will be reduced by 99,000; leaving 71,000 still uninsured. If the State does not expand Medicaid coverage, then people living in extreme poverty will have no medical insurance,” she stated at Bi-State’s Legislative and Business Breakfast yesterday. “A person earning between \$8,000 and \$11,000 a year, far below a livable wage, will remain uninsured,” she said. In fact, people living in poverty will pay significantly more out-of-pocket for health services than other lower- and middle-income individuals who were uninsured prior to the Affordable Care Act.

The federal government will cover 100 percent of the health care costs of a Medicaid expansion between 2014 and 2016. This gives New Hampshire the opportunity to focus on primary care and preventive services to improve the health of our population and better manage chronic disease with full coverage of the expense.

“Having insurance coverage does not equate to access without a place to go to for care. Without access to primary care, without the Community Health Centers, expanded Medicaid or insurance alone is of little value,” said Kuenning. “Access to care is what makes coverage real.”

Established in 1986, Bi-State Primary Care Association, serving Vermont and New Hampshire, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c) 3 charitable organization that promotes access to effective and affordable primary care and preventive services for all, with special emphasis on underserved populations in New Hampshire and Vermont.

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