



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Alliance for Full Participation Founding Members Release Recommendations for Long-Term Medicaid Reform at “Many Voices, One Vision” Summit**

**Washington, D.C.** – Calling it a “crucial lifeline for more than 1.8 million individuals of all ages with intellectual and other developmental disabilities,” the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) today released its much-anticipated recommendations for long-term reform of Medicaid, a joint federal and state program for America’s neediest citizens. The announcement was made at AFP’s “Many Voices, One Vision” national Summit in Washington, D.C. The Summit audience included over 2,000 people from all branches of the developmental disabilities community, including self advocates, family members, researchers, service providers and direct support professionals. Also in attendance was Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Mark F. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., who was presented with a copy of the plan by AFP Founding Members.

“We believe that it is imperative that Medicaid continue to be a reliable source of funding to meet the health care and long-term services needs of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities,” said Robert M. Gettings, Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), an AFP Founding Member organization. “Unfortunately, much of the discussion of late regarding Medicaid has been about cuts. This concerns those of us who recognize that Medicaid is an essential lifeline for tens of thousands of Americans with disabilities – the vast majority of whom are poor.”

The AFP Medicaid reform statement articulated three areas of concern regarding the long-term health of the program, including:

- An anticipated 40% growth in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities requiring Medicaid-funded services over the next 15 years;
- The need to recruit and retain an additional 300,000 direct support and other professionals to meet this growing demand for services; and
- Stemming the current steady decline in the number of service providers willing to furnish services and supports to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families.

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“As the AFP Medicaid reform statement recognizes, we need to address the national recruitment and retention crisis of direct support workers that has placed the lives of millions of Americans who rely on long-term services and supports at-risk,” said Stephen Bennett, president and CEO of United Cerebral Palsy. “Direct support workers manage medications, prepare and assist with meals, handle hygiene concerns and provide other critical supports. They deserve an adequate salary that doesn’t send them into poverty, as well as comprehensive health care benefits.”

In December 2003, eleven leading organizations serving the developmental disabilities field officially joined together to form the Alliance for Full Participation, LLC (AFP). AFP’s objective is full realization of the vision of people with developmental disabilities living meaningful, productive and personally satisfying lives in their community of choice. The “Many Voices, One Vision” Summit is the first major event of its kind in the United States and marks a significant step forward in the disabilities field in that self-advocates will be working in tandem with other stakeholders to establish a national social policy agenda aimed at improving their own lives.

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**(For more information about The Alliance for Full Participation or to obtain a copy of AFP’s Medicaid Reform recommendations, please visit [www.allianceforfullparticipation.org](http://www.allianceforfullparticipation.org) or contact Jim Carroll at 410-203-1970.)**