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TAKEACTION MINNESOTA APPLAUDS INTRODUCTION OF SENATE, HOUSE BILLS STRENGTHENING MINNESOTACARE UNDER AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Legislation’s Biggest Obstacle: Lack of Federal Guidance By HHS

St. Paul, MN – TakeAction Minnesota issued the following statement from Associate Director Liz Doyle, upon today's introductions of S.F. 184 and H.F. 214, establishing MinnesotaCare as the state's basic health program:

"We applaud the work of Senator Lourey and Representative Murphy on today's introductions of S.F. 184 and H.F. 214 to keep and improve the MinnesotaCare program. MinnesotaCare is a successful bipartisan program that has provided affordable coverage to lower income working families for two decades and is a centerpiece of our state's health care system.

“The legislation introduced today would make key improvements to this program beginning in 2014. It would also bring in substantially more federal funding to support MinnesotaCare through the Basic Health Program option of the Affordable Care Act. Improving MinnesotaCare, and linking it to the ‘BHP’ funding, is a win-win for Minnesota families and our state budget.

“Unfortunately, this legislation faces a significant obstacle - the lack of federal HHS guidance on the Basic Health Program. Over two years after the ACA passed, HHS has failed to provide states with the guidance needed to take advantage of BHP financing. This federal inaction is inexcusable. Thousands of Minnesotans are waiting in limbo in the face an uncertain future to their health coverage in 2014. Their options on the Exchange would be far more expensive, and subject them to substantial tax liability.

“We urge President Obama and HHS Secretary Sebelius to heed a recent bipartisan letter sent from Minnesota's congressional delegation, which urges HHS officials to allow Minnesota to proceed with a BHP demonstration project. A BHP demonstration project would allow Minnesota continue this popular program. It would avert disruption of coverage and significant cost increases for thousands of MinnesotaCare families. And it would attract more federal financial support for MinnesotaCare.

“Minnesota is a leader in ACA implementation and has long been a leader in health reform. Minnesota families should not be forced to take a step backward in 2014. We appreciate the leadership of Minnesota lawmakers in letting all Minnesota families move forward in 2014. We would also ask President Obama and Secretary Sebelius to make the same commitment.”
TakeAction Minnesota is a statewide people’s network of more than 14,000 individuals and 28 organizational members. We work collaboratively to raise the voices of Minnesotans in their own communities to advance social, racial and economic justice. The organization has offices in St. Paul and Duluth, MN.

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