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CONTACT: Anne Saunders  
NH Fiscal Policy Institute  
603.715.5382

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## **N.H. GROUPS ASK FOR MEANINGFUL ROLE IN SHAPING THE NEXT PHASE OF MEDICAID MANAGED CARE**

CONCORD \_ With the Executive Council's vote today to approve a set of multi-year, multi-billion dollar contracts for Medicaid, local groups say the next step is to ensure the state's health care providers and advocates have regular input during implementation.

"We thank the Council for slowing things down so the contracts could be thoughtfully reviewed, and now we ask them to commit to making sure that a widely representative range of stakeholders – including providers and advocates – are actual participants in the planning and implementation process," said Jeff Dickinson, Advocacy Director for Granite State Independent Living.

While several community forums are planned, advocates say a broad range of stakeholders must have an ongoing and substantive opportunity to be involved in setting the priorities and developing the plans for ongoing implementation of these contracts.

Medicaid provides services to about 130,000 people in New Hampshire, including children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. The switch to a managed care system with private vendors represents a major shift for Medicaid recipients, health care providers and those who administer Medicaid for the state.

A coalition of groups, including AARP New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Hospital Association, Granite State Independent Living, the Disabilities Rights Center and the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute, seek to be involved in guiding the changeover.

"Provider associations and advocacy groups are ready and expecting to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner to ensure successful implementation," said Kelly Clark, State Director of AARP New Hampshire.