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 **news release**

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 **Legislature Leaves Thousands of Granite Staters**

**without Access to Affordable Health Care**

CONCORD – The New Hampshire legislature today failed to reach a compromise on accepting federal funds to expand the state's Medicaid program, leaving approximately 49,000 low-income adults without access to affordable health care.

"Today is a dark day for New Hampshire,” said Jeff McLynch, the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. “The legislature's inability to agree will have direct and serious consequences for thousands of hard-working Granite Staters. Many will leave medical conditions undiagnosed or untreated, conditions that will only get worse and more expensive over time. Others will be forced to choose between food and medicine or to go bankrupt due to mounting medical bills."

Competing proposals before the House of Representatives and the Senate today (SS HB 1 and SS SB 1) would have enabled New Hampshire to dedicate federal funds to extending health insurance coverage to adults aged 19 through 64 with household incomes under 138 percent of the federal poverty line. Both proposals would have used a combination of New Hampshire’s existing Medicaid program, employer-sponsored health insurance, and the new health insurance Marketplace to achieve those ends. Where the Senate's initial proposal would have terminated access to Medicaid after one year, the House's proposal would have permitted longer participation to allow sufficient time for state agencies and private insurers to put in place the structures and products needed for individuals to access coverage through the Marketplace. The programs created under the Senate's proposal also would have ended after three years, while the House would have made its reforms permanent. The two chambers were unable to reconcile these and other differences prior to the conclusion of their special session today.

Added McLynch, "New Hampshire has a long history of setting aside differences and finding practical, common sense solutions to the challenges before us. It is unfortunate that policymakers were unable to heed that tradition, especially when so much is at stake."

Research conducted by the Lewin Group suggests that New Hampshire will forego $2.4 billion in federal funds through the end of the decade due to the legislature's inaction.

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