

WASHINGTON, DC –“ Congressman Joe Courtney today praised Connecticut as it became the first state in the nation to expand Medicaid coverage to low-income adults in compliance with the new Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the state’s plan amendment today, making approximately 45,000 adults eligible for Medicaid under the health reform bill.

“Virtually every step of the way, Connecticut has led the way in embracing the new health care bill, which is covering more Americans and increasing access for millions,” Courtney said. “UTC, the State Employee Health Plan and Mohegan Sun have all provided insurance coverage for their employees’ under-26 dependents far ahead of the bill’s imposed deadline, and today Connecticut is first again. I Congratulate Connecticut hospitals for their intelligent leadership pursuing this opportunity.”

Beginning in 2014, ACA requires states to cover all low-income individuals up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) -- \$14,400 for an individual; it also gave state the option of covering low-income individuals early. Prior to passage of health care reform, states could only cover low-income childless adults by applying for a waiver of Medicaid rules. These waivers were temporary and states had to meet strict criteria for approval and renewal. The new ACA state plan option allows states to get federal funding to enroll these low-income adults right away.

Connecticut’s State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA) program currently provides thousands of low-income adults with medical coverage in the state. Unlike Medicaid, the SAGA program is financed entirely by state funds. Connecticut’s decision to apply for this new opportunity provided under the health care reform package will expand access to care, while reducing state budgetary obligations. On April 12, Rep. Courtney sent a letter to HHS in support of Connecticut’s application.

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