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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans (IAMHP) to Honor Two Nonprofits: Legal Council for Health Justice and Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans, a statewide membership organization of health plans that participate in Medicaid managed care in Illinois, is bestowing its 2015 Advocacy Leadership award today to three attorneys at two Chicago-based nonprofits in recognition of successful litigation that has to date, restored more than half a billion Medicaid-reimbursable dollars to hospitals, clinics, and providers caring for over 3.1 million adults and children statewide. This advocacy allowed thousands of medical and community care providers across Illinois, including high-profile safety net hospitals such as Mt. Sinai Hospital, Schwab Rehab Hospital, Roseland Community Hospital, and Holy Cross Hospital to stay fully operational.

Accepting the award from each organization are: Stephanie Altman, assistant director of health justice, and John Bouman, president, of the national nonprofit, **Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law**; and Tom Yates, executive director of the Illinois nonprofit, **Legal Council for Health Justice**.

In early July, the State Medicaid agency announced it would not pay medical providers for services provided on or after July 1, 2015 due to the state budget impasse. With *pro bono* assistance from the private firm Goldberg Kohn, the attorneys went to court to enforce consent decrees in two cases—in *Memisowski v. Maram* to ensure access to quality pediatric care for low-income children, and in *Beeks v. Bradley* to require payment of health care services for all Illinoisans. Both class actions were originally filed by the attorneys while at Legal Assistance Foundation in 1992. The litigation resulted in federal court orders requiring the State to pay all Medicaid providers without delay.

“The budget standoff could not have come at a worse time—not only for patients, but also for innovation in eligibility and delivery of health care services to low-income populations in Illinois,” notes Samantha Olds Frey, the executive director of the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans. “On behalf of the eleven statewide managed care organizations we represent – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Aetna Better Health, Cigna-Health Spring, Illinicare Centene Corporation, County Care, Family Health Network, Humana Health Plan, Meridian Health Plan, Molina HealthCare, Harmony Wellcare, and Health Alliance Connect, we are grateful for support in helping the state to continue its transition to a care coordination model that prioritizes holistic healthcare and wellness for the 2.1 million people that Health Plans serve.”

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The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty. We specialize in practical solutions. We advocate for and serve clients directly, while also building the capacity of the nation's legal aid providers to advance justice and opportunity for their clients. www.povertylaw.org.

Legal Council for Health Justice (formerly AIDS Legal Council of Chicago) uses the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being for people facing barriers due to illness and disability. All of our medical-legal partnership programs work uniquely with health and hospital systems to train and support the care provider network, provide direct representation to referred patients, and conduct systemic advocacy to promote health equity among populations facing chronic, disabling, and stigmatized health and social conditions.