



For Immediate Release
March 21, 2011

Contact: Jodi Mitchell, KVH Executive Director
502-552-1406, KVHexec@kyvoicesforhealth.org

**PROTECTING SENIORS HEALTH
Statement of Kentucky Voices for Health
on the First Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act**

March 23 marks the one-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act being signed into law. Now that health reform is the law of the land, Kentucky Voices for Health believes it is time to move forward to protect seniors' health.

Moving forward means strengthening Medicare and saving seniors money by continuing to crack down on waste, fraud and abuse. Moving forward means giving seniors the peace of mind that they won't ever fall back into the prescription drug "donut hole." And it means keeping seniors healthy by giving them preventive care without a co-pay or a deductible. It's about empowering seniors to have more freedom and restoring their control over their health care decisions. It's time to move forward. Simply put, Kentucky's seniors cannot afford to go back.

The Affordable Care Act contains a number of important provisions that help seniors:

- **Under the Affordable Care Act, three million seniors in the donut hole received a \$250 rebate last year.** The Affordable Care Act provides relief to seniors who fall in the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole" when drug costs are not covered. In 2010, an estimated 129,000 seniors in Kentucky and three million nationwide received a \$250 rebate check to help with the cost of prescription drugs. In 2011, seniors who hit the donut hole are eligible for \$1,500 in savings. By 2020, the donut hole will be closed completely.
- **The Affordable Care Act provides 44 million seniors with free preventive care benefits, including an annual wellness exam.** Under the Affordable Care Act, more than 750,000 seniors in Kentucky and 44.1 million nationwide will no longer have to pay for Medicare-approved preventive care services. The preventive benefits available in 2011 include a free annual wellness visit and screenings for bone density, diabetes and certain cancers. That means health problems can be detected and treated sooner.
- **The Affordable Care Act provides tools to crack down on waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare.** The Affordable Care Act provides an additional \$300 million

for stronger enforcement and gives the government more authority to increase oversight of companies participating in Medicare and Medicaid.

- **The Affordable Care Act provides financial support for early retirees.** An estimated 63,200 Kentuckians will benefit from the early retiree reinsurance program in the Affordable Care Act that provides health coverage to early retirees who are not yet eligible for Medicare.
- **The Affordable Care Act provides expanded Medicaid services and options to help seniors with home care.** According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Affordable Care Act provides “states with new options for offering home and community-based services through a Medicaid state plan.” It also establishes the “Community First Choice Option in Medicaid to provide community-based attendant supports and services to individuals with disabilities who require an institutional level of care.” States will receive a higher federal matching rate to help with the costs of the program.

Detailed information about the Affordable Care Act and its impact on Kentucky is also available in *The New Health Reform Law: What It Means for Kentuckians*, an issue brief prepared by Kentucky Voices for Health that can be downloaded at <http://kyvoicesforhealth.com/reform.html>. The brief was produced to help Kentuckians understand the health reform law. It includes a basic timeline of what will happen when under the new law, frequently asked questions and resources for further information

Kentucky Voices for Health seeks to work with communities and organization partners to broaden awareness of health care issues. KVH maintains a speakers’ bureau of coalition members available to attend meetings and events to provide information about KVH’s priorities as well as the provisions of the Affordable Care Act. A speakers’ bureau request form can be accessed from <http://kyvoicesforhealth.com/speakersbureau.html>.

Kentucky Voices for Health is a broad coalition of nearly 100 organizations working to improve Kentuckians’ health and health care coverage. The coalition’s leadership team is composed of representatives from AARP Kentucky, Advocacy Action Network, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, Covering Kentucky Kids and Families, Kentucky Council of Churches, Kentucky Equal Justice Center, the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, and Kentucky Youth Advocates. Kentucky Voices for Health receives grant funding from the Public Welfare Foundation through the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

Kentucky Voices for Health: Building a healthy Kentucky together.

We’re a coalition of concerned Kentuckians who believe that the best health care solutions are found when everyone works together to build them. Right now, families and businesses in every county are facing rising costs, and too many of us go without needed health care. Healthy families create healthy economies. And a healthy Kentucky economy is something we all want. So we’re working step by step to build a healthier Kentucky for our families, our children and our grandchildren.