

**HARTFORD – Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) Governor Dannel Malloy,** and representatives from the healthcare industry celebrated the 45<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the country's first Medicare payment Friday morning. Due to voting in Washington, Congressman Larson participated in the discussion with a taped message while the Governor and healthcare leaders celebrated at Hartford Hospital.

Medicare was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 30, 1965. The first Medicare benefit payment was issued by Aetna to Hartford Hospital on July 9, 1966.

In addition to Governor Malloy, recently named **President and CEO-elect of Hartford Hospital Jeffrey Flaks**, **President of Aetna Medicare Gary Thomas** and **President of the Connecticut Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans Kevin Lynch** participated in the celebration.

“Forty-five years ago our community played a major role in the history of Medicare by participating in the first beneficiary payment in the entire country,” Congressman Larson said. “Today as some in Washington continue to take aim at a program that has provided healthcare for hundreds of millions of Americans over the years, I am pleased to be joined by so many leaders in reaffirming our support for Medicare. I want to thank the governor, Hartford Hospital’s Jeff Flaks, Aetna’s Gary Thomas for being here today to participate in this celebration. I also want to thank Aetna and Hartford Health Care CEOs Mark Bertolini and Elliot Joseph for their commitment and innovation in the delivery of healthcare to Medicare recipients.”

“Medicare stands out as one of the country’s most important initiatives—a commitment to the health and well-being of our citizens,” said Governor Malloy. “Healthcare and a better quality of life for seniors and the most vulnerable among us is part of ensuring the strength of the national safety net and should not be a bargaining chip for Washington. I am pleased to join healthcare and consumer representatives at this anniversary celebration.”

**“We’re delighted to have Governor Malloy here today and hear from Congressman Larson as we mark this historic event,” Flaks said. “For 157 years, Hartford Hospital has been serving and caring for the community, especially the underserved. The 45th**

**anniversary of the very first Medicare check issued in United States was a momentous occasion - the beginning of ensuring care for the elderly. These patients come to Hartford Hospital now, and they will come in the future. We welcome them and always will.”**

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“Aetna is proud to have played a leadership role in launching the Medicare program, and our commitment to making the system better is stronger than ever,” said Gary Thomas, president, Aetna Medicare. “We are leading the way to improved health outcomes for beneficiaries while lowering costs for them and the government by investing in Health IT, effective care coordination, disease management, and newer, comprehensive, population-based models of care like Patient Centered Medical Homes and Accountable Care Organizations. We hope our continued partnership with Medicare will deliver even better results in the future.”

“For the past 13 years, Rep. John Larson has been an eloquent and forceful spokesperson for older Americans, younger Americans and mentally or physically impaired Americans,” said President of the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans Kevin Lynch. “For the 571,000 Connecticut citizens on Medicare, for the 525,000 residents on Medicaid, for the 622,000 who receive Social Security checks the Connecticut Alliance for retired Americans says, thank you.”

There are 47.7 million Medicare beneficiaries in the United States with Connecticut being home to 571,000.

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