

## PRESS STATEMENT

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### **Health care advocates decry loss of coverage for over 100,000 in last 18 months**

(BOSTON, MA) – Health Care For All testified at the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Hearings for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services at the State House. Karla Fortunato, Associate Policy Director, spoke on behalf of Health Care For All.

“Over the past 18 months, we have seen the most concentrated assault on public services for the needy and vulnerable in the Commonwealth’s history. In no fiscal crisis in the past 30 years have we witnessed such a dismantling of core and essential services. 100,000 people have lost health coverage due to population eliminations, increased premiums and co-pays, eligibility cut backs, and a whole package of administrative obstacles.”

“This 100,000 includes ten thousand low-income, legal immigrants who were eliminated from the program in August of this year. These are people who have all of the appropriate documentation to live, work and pay taxes in Massachusetts. People who are chronically ill will now be forced to forgo primary and preventive care and rely on more costly emergency services in order to take care of their ongoing medical needs.”

“Massachusetts is reeling, like many other states, from the effects of the economy – reduced tax revenue, increased unemployment, et. al. As you craft your budget, we urge you to consider the plight of those with compromised health coverage or no coverage at all. Ultimately, the cost to the Commonwealth of treating these individuals will be greater if care is provided through our already overcrowded, underresourced emergency departments. Making an effort to invest in the health and wellbeing of our citizenry is the right prescription for the Commonwealth.”

*Health Care For All is a statewide advocacy organization founded in 1985. Our mission is to secure affordable, quality, equitable health care for all Massachusetts residents.*