



The Governor's Inadequate Budget

The Governor released his proposed budget for the fiscal year 2005 early this year. The proposal did not restore any of the painful cuts that have been made over the past two years. Instead, the proposal makes approximately \$150 million in of cuts to providers, including hospitals, health centers, nursing homes, and pharmacies.

Over the past two years, there have been drastic cuts to MassHealth that have impacted hundreds of thousands of people. Without coverage, people are forced to use our expensive and overcrowded emergency rooms for their care. Here is a partial list of some of the cuts:

- ◆ The Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) capped enrollment, and implemented new and increased premiums. The Governor's budget would result in over 14,000 children on the waiting list to access this program.
- ◆ Over 10,000 legal immigrants were eliminated from MassHealth last August and another 2000 will lose coverage under the Governor's budget.
- ◆ The Governor's budget authorizes enrollment caps to health programs for people with HIV, people with disabilities and working adults. Once the enrollment cap is reached, eligible people will not be able to get coverage.
- ◆ Adults who rely on MassHealth lost nearly all access to dental care, including cleanings and fillings, dentures, glasses, and some braces.
- ◆ New and increased premiums and co-pays were implemented for all MassHealth members.

What is the next step?

Right now, the House and Senate are preparing alternate budget proposals. It is critical for them to hear from their constituents NOW that MassHealth is vital to their constituents and essential to their communities.



ACTION STEP:
CALL YOUR LEGISLATOR!

MAKE THE CALL:

Call Representatives at 617-722-2000 and Senators at 617-722-1455. To find out who your legislators are, call 1-800-392-6090.

MASSHEALTH TALKING POINTS:

1. MassHealth is our Medicaid program. Over 900,000 Massachusetts residents rely on MassHealth to get health care. They are low-income children, seniors, parents, people with disabilities and people with HIV. They do not have access to any other source of care, except the Free Care Pool.
2. MassHealth generates money from the federal government. Washington gives the state a dollar for every dollar that we spend. This revenue is good for the state's budget and the Massachusetts economy.
3. When sick people lose their health coverage, they still need care. Instead of seeing a doctor right away, they often delay care, getting sicker and requiring more expensive treatments.