

Health Care For All

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Uninsured Numbers Surge in Massachusetts

Health Care For All calls for aggressive leadership to address uninsured crisis

(BOSTON, MA) – Health care advocates are disappointed by new figures showing substantial growth in the number of uninsured people in Massachusetts.

“The numbers are all going in the wrong direction. We need aggressive leadership at all levels of government to get people the basic coverage they need to be secure and healthy,” said John McDonough, Executive Director of Health Care For All.

The state’s Division of Health Care Finance and Policy released new figures today showing that some 460,000 Massachusetts residents are without health coverage. This compared to 418,000 found by the survey two years ago. This represents a 10% growth in the numbers of uninsured. The 2000 survey found 365,000 uninsured people in the Commonwealth.

At the same time, the federal census bureau released the results of its survey, which uses a different methodology than the state study. The census found a growth in the uninsurance rate from 9.1% in 2001-2002 to 10.3% in 2002-2003. This corresponds to a 13% growth in the uninsurance rate, the sixth highest of any state and four times greater than the national average.

“We know from multiple studies that the uninsured receive less care and as result are sicker. Besides the impact of disease and poor health, this results in reduced earnings from work and reduced educational achievement,” McDonough said.

Yesterday, Health Care For All called on the administration to withdraw recently-proposed regulations that would reduce eligibility and protections for patients using the Uncompensated Care Pool. “Given these new figures, making it harder for uninsured people to get primary care does not make sense,” added McDonough.

Health Care For All is working on a comprehensive plan to reduce the number of uninsured in the Bay State. Legislation to implement the plan will be proposed for the upcoming legislative session.

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