

# HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

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May 4, 2004

Hon. Mitt Romney  
Governor of Massachusetts  
The State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA

Dear Governor Romney:

Yesterday, your administration revealed that you expect a surplus of \$250 million in the Medicaid accounts for this fiscal year.

We are writing to request that you promptly restore health coverage to the approximately 10,000 legal “special status” immigrants, as required by law. These immigrants were eliminated from coverage last August, pursuant to an amendment to section 16D of chapter 118E of the General Laws. That amendment, however, directed the administration to fully restore coverage “if appropriations permit.” (M.G.L. c. 118E §16D(6)) With your announcement yesterday, there is no question that sufficient appropriated funds exist to restore this critical coverage.

As you may know, this claim is raised in a legal action, *Lima v. Preston*, that is currently pending in the Superior Court. The plaintiffs in that case are aggressively considering their legal options given these new facts.

These low-income legal immigrants have been left with no source of basic health care. They are forced to use the Uncompensated Care Pool for their care, which is under severe strain and cannot provide many of the essential health services needed. Annual cost for restoring coverage to this population is estimated to be \$15 million.

More broadly, we urge the administration to use this surplus to restore coverage and benefits to the thousands of Massachusetts residents who have lost their health benefits. Over 13,500 children are on the waiting list for the Children’s Medical Security Plan, and thousands more have lost coverage due to new premiums. MassHealth has taken away eyeglasses, dental coverage and other services. Proven public health programs have been eliminated, leading to higher rates of disease and premature death. Given the hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to health and health care programs in the past several years, we believe any discussion of further tax cuts is wrong.

Sincerely,

John E. McDonough  
Executive Director