

**Health Care For All
FY 2005 Senate Ways & Means
Preliminary Budget Analysis**

Overall Health Spending: The Senate budget generally adequately funds nearly all health coverage programs, and includes a number of initiatives promoted by Health Care For All. **The major exception is they did not continue MassHealth coverage for legally residing seniors and disabled immigrants.**

MassHealth Essential Level Funded: The Senate W&M committee level funds MassHealth Essential at \$160 million. The section allows for enrollment above the cap of 36,000 members if the appropriation permits. (Section 292)

Immigrant Eligibility Restrictions: The Senate Ways and Means proposal terminates coverage for 2,750 legally residing senior and disabled immigrants who are expected to have their MassHealth benefits restored on June 1st. The proposal also continues to deny coverage for 7,000 additional adult legal immigrants who were cut from coverage by the FY 2004 budget.

EAEDC: The Senate W&M committee fully funds Emergency Assistance for the Elderly, Disabled and Children. The Senate does not include House language limiting health benefits for immigrants joining the program.

Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP): Item 4000-0990 provides \$21.4 million to CMSP, fully funding the program. This will eliminate the waiting list and enable the 14,000 kids waiting for coverage to enroll. The Senate bill does not include our proposed rollback of increased premiums in CMSP.

Healthy Start: Item 4000-0895 appropriates \$14.2 million to the Healthy Start Program, fully funding this program. This will ensure that all low-income pregnant women have access to prenatal care.

MassHealth HIV: Item 4000-1400 funds this program at \$8.3 million. While the amount is less than the amount appropriated in prior years, it is closer to the actual cost of running the program with the existing caseload. The eligibility level remains at 133% of poverty, reduced from 200% at the start of FY 2004.

Disabled Managed Care Pilot Program: Section 298 directs EOHHS to create a pilot program within the managed care system for 25,000 disabled MassHealth recipients. Their care would be paid under a fixed per member per month capitated rate. A more restrictive, but similar proposal was included in last years House Ways & Means budget, but was rejected by the Senate and did not survive conference committee. This year's language does not establish the fixed reimbursement rate; last year, it was set at a level substantially below the current costs of care.

Personal Care Attendant Services: Under section 272, the Senate directs EOHHS to consult and collaborate with personal care attendant program stakeholders in the development of any program changes. In addition it requires EOHHS to communicate regularly with stakeholders on any personal care attendant issues.

Prescription Advantage is funded at \$110M, which should be sufficient to meet the program's needs. Section 273 requires an open enrolled period of at least one month and restricts the Administration from imposing any additional cost sharing increases during FY2005. Section 274 directs elder affairs to maximize federal revenues available through the Medicare Discount Card Program for members of Prescription Advantage at or below 135% fpl. This section protects members' access to drugs now available through Prescription Advantage.

Public Hearings: Section 165 requires EOHHS to hold public hearings before changing regulations that will restrict coverage or covered services.

Home & Community Care Expansion: Section 279 expands eligibility for home and community based services from 100% fpl to 300% fpl.

Employer Disclosure: Section 301 requires EOHHS to prepare a report listing employers who have 50 or more employees who are enrolled in public insurance programs.

Redirect Dedicated Tobacco Taxes to Health: The Senate W&M budget directs all tobacco taxes into a dedicated fund to be spent on health care, both MassHealth expansion programs and the Children's Medical Security Plan.

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