



Missouri Association for Social Welfare

For more information contact:
Lise Bernstein
Missouri Budget Project
314-542-2269

Sharon Feltman
Missouri Assn for Social Welfare
573-634-2901 or 573-228-4674

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Survey Measures Impact of Medicaid Cuts

**Missourians Report Cutting Back on Food, Utilities;
Additional Strain Placed on Health Care Providers**

March 14, 2006 A report released today in Jefferson City shows that low-income Missourians who were cut from the state's Medicaid health insurance program are coping by cutting back on food and utilities and seeking care at emergency rooms and free or community-based clinics.

The report, based on a survey of 2,435 Missourians, was conducted by the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW) and The Missouri Budget Project (MBP). Data analysis was provided by Timothy D. McBride, PhD, Professor of Health Management Policy, School of Public Health, St. Louis University.

“Missourians are being hurt— many report the need to cut back on other necessities of life, such as food and utilities,” says Sharon Feltman, Director of the Health Access Project at MASW.

“Medicaid cuts will increase the use of emergency rooms, shifting costs to others and creating extra burdens on safety net providers,” says Jennifer Hill, Director of Health Policy at the MBP. *(The survey’s key findings are attached. The full report is available at www.mobudget.org and www.masw.org.)*

The two groups are calling on the state to restore Medicaid health insurance to the 100,000 low-income Missourians who were cut from the program in 2005. “Missouri is expecting about \$245 million more in revenue than anticipated for this fiscal year which ends June 30. This surplus is enough to provide access to health care to everyone who was cut last year, including working parents, the elderly and individuals with disabilities,” Hill said.

In addition, the state must track the impact of the Medicaid cuts on low-income Missourians. “The state should build on the knowledge gained from this initial survey by systematically and formally evaluating the outcomes. Many other states require a formal review when changes are enacted,” Feltman said. “Also, the state should evaluate the impact of the loss of federal Medicaid dollars on health care providers and on local economies.”

Because the state is not evaluating the outcomes of the Medicaid cuts, more than 30 nonprofit organizations throughout Missouri developed and administered a written survey. “The survey is not a random sample of Medicaid enrollees affected by the legislation enacted in 2005. It is a self-selected sample from respondents willing and able to complete the survey after it was made available to them by the participating organizations,” Dr. McBride said. “However, the sample results show that in some significant way it is very similar to the population enrolled in Medicaid in 2005.”

“It is vital for the states to fund and administer research itself or facilitate studies of independent researchers. It is also critical to provide access to data needed to do comprehensive studies,” Hill said.

“The public deserves to hold our elected officials accountable. When significant changes are made to health care delivery and access, it is unconscionable that the outcomes are not being measured. We encourage Missourians to contact their legislators about this critical issue,” Feltman said.

The Missouri Association for Social Welfare provides leadership, research, education and advocacy to improve public policies and programs impacting the health and welfare of all people in Missouri.

The Missouri Budget Project is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan fiscal analysis organization that informs the public on Missouri’s budgetary and tax policy options and their impact on moderate and low-income citizens.

Losing Health Care in Missouri

Survey Results: Impact of 2005 Medicaid Cuts

Key Findings

Missourians are feeling insecure about their families' health care.

- 52% of all respondents affected by the Medicaid changes say they don't know what they will do to access health care
- 62% of respondents who are parents of children enrolled in MC+ say they don't know what they will do
- 53% of respondents in the MAWD program say they don't know what they will do

Some Missouri citizens forced to choose between food, utilities, and health care.

- 34% of all respondents say they will cut back on food
- 36% of all respondents say they will cut back on utilities
- Of those saying they will cut back on food, 49% were elderly, 45% were people with disabilities and 43% were in the MAWD program

The reductions in Medicaid coverage will stress an already strained health care delivery system, leading to cost-shifting.

- 38% of affected Medicaid enrollees say they will go to the local emergency room to get needed medical care
- 45% of low-income parents responding and 47% of respondents who lost MAWD say they will go to the local emergency room for health care
- 34% of affected Medicaid enrollees say they will use a local free or community-based clinic

Respondents say they are losing critical health services.

When respondents were asked “*What services have you or your family lost?*” critical health care services were mentioned.

Prescription Medications

- 59% of the total affected respondents say that they cannot afford or have lost coverage of prescription medications
- 69% of parents who lost MC+ coverage say they cannot afford or lost coverage for their prescription medications

Dental

- 40% of affected respondents say they have lost dental services

Physician Services

- 20% of affected respondents say their doctor no longer takes them as a patient

Mental Health Services

- 26% of affected respondents say they “no longer receive mental health services”
- 31% of responding MC+ parents say they no longer receive mental health services

Eye Glasses

- 50% of respondents affected by the loss of Medicaid say they cannot get eye glasses
- 58% of the elderly respondents and 59% of disabled respondents who lost Medicaid coverage say they cannot get their eye glasses

Hearing Aids

- 27% of elderly respondents who lost Medicaid coverage say they have lost hearing aid services or cannot get a hearing aid

Wheelchairs

- 22% of respondents in the MAWD program say they cannot get batteries or accessories for their wheelchairs