

Rhode Islanders for Social and Economic Security

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Medicaid Matters to Rhode Island!

Overview: This year's state budget debate will focus on a question of priorities: will we provide critical supports for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and low-income people, or continue to protect the wealthy.

Governor Carcieri has made it clear in statements to the press that he is considering severe cuts to Medicaid that could permanently cripple its ability to provide health care to Rhode Island's most vulnerable people. He was quoted in a Providence Journal article on 1/2/06 saying that Medicaid is, "sucking all the resources out of the rest of the state budget" while also saying that taxes for top income earners – those earning over \$300,000 per year – be cut.

Here are some facts:

Medicaid provides health care coverage to 183,769 Rhode Island children, disabled and elderly.

Medicaid supports all families and must be protected.

- In Rhode Island, 137,607 children and their families receive quality coverage through the state's Medicaid program RIte Care/Share.
- In Rhode Island, 46,162 elderly and disabled participate.
- Medicaid pays for about half of all nursing home care.

Cutting Medicaid will raise health care costs for all of us.

- In Rhode Island, as is true nationally, Medicaid is usually the only source of health care coverage for its beneficiaries. Medicaid cuts will increase the ranks of the uninsured and underinsured.
- Uninsured and underinsured people receive high-priced care in emergency rooms, leading to higher health care costs and rising health insurance rates for everyone.
- Medicaid cuts will lower payments to hospitals and clinics, putting the quality of care at stake.

Cutting Medicaid is bad for Rhode Island's economy.

- Rhode Island receives matching funds for money we spend on Medicaid, bringing needed funds into the state, translating into jobs and wages. Less money means fewer jobs and less economic activity.

Cutting Medicaid will limit access to quality health care.

- Cuts to Medicaid could put Rhode Island's RIte Care program at risk, forcing a reduction in benefits or forcing some enrollees into more expensive plans that cover fewer services. Cuts would also limit nursing home placements or lift the guarantee of affordable coverage that has helped protect Rhode Island's fragile health care system.

Take Action! To learn what you can do, call 463-5368!