



Sowers of Justice

Catholic Legislative Network

**Action
Alert**

**Contact Governor Pawlenty:
Ask Him to Protect
Health Programs and
Minnesota's Families!**

May 13, 2009

**The Time is NOW – Contact the Governor
to Protect Necessary Health & Human Services Programs!**

Background

The Health and Human Services (HHS) conference committee met into the wee hours of Sunday morning to craft an omnibus budget bill to send to the Governor. This budget has now been approved by the House and Senate, and is waiting for the Governor's approval or veto. The last few days of the session will require all of us to raise our voices to protect programs that support people living in poverty and crisis.

Here's the good news: despite cutting \$500 million from the HHS slice of the budget, the HHS Omnibus bill (HF1362) actually does some good things. It adds over 20,000 children to public health insurance programs. Youth who age out of foster care would be automatically enrolled and maintain coverage in public health programs. It avoids dangerous penalties to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). About 113,000 low-income Minnesotans retain their health care eligibility. \$3 million goes toward programs to end long-term homelessness. Runaway and homeless youth programs are funded.

But it's certainly not all good news. The Omnibus bill includes cuts to hospitals and nursing homes. Personal care attendants (PCAs), who serve the elderly and low-income people with disabilities, have their reimbursement rates cut. The most vulnerable Minnesotans are still at risk.

As bad as these cuts are, things could get much worse. While this bill cuts \$500 million from the HHS budget, it is based on new revenue that was included in both the House and Senate tax bills. Any reduction in those new revenues will translate into deeper cuts in the Health & Human Services budget.

Recommended Action

The Governor's signature on the Health and Human Services Omnibus bill (HF1362) would provide the best option for protecting people living on the margins in these difficult economic times.

Please call or email Governor Pawlenty immediately. Ask him to protect the programs that serve Minnesota's most vulnerable residents by signing the HHS Omnibus bill (HF1362). You can reach Governor Pawlenty at 651-296-3391 or tim.pawlenty@state.mn.us. Thank you for continuing to raise your voice for the common good.

For Further Information:

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