



Sowers of Justice

Catholic Legislative Network

**Action
Alert**

Urgent! Please Respond to Governor Pawlenty's Veto

May 15, 2009

Background:

Late last night, Governor Pawlenty signed the Health & Human Services bill. While this is the action that we advocated for, he regretfully used his line item veto power to strike the entire \$381 million appropriation for General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC). While we recognize that times are tough and cuts must be made, this veto undermines some of our core values of the common good, human dignity and compassion for the poor.

GAMC provides basic health coverage for the poorest single adults in our state. Nearly 30,000 men and women, most of whom make about \$200 per month in income, lose all health coverage with the Governor's decision. \$200 equals \$7.15 per day. Imagine living on \$7.15 per day, and then being asked to carry an enormous burden in solving the state budget deficit. Approximately 350 of Catholic Charities' clients have access to health care through GAMC.

When the most most vulnerable adults lose their health care safety net, they will wait until a treatable symptom becomes a serious illness or disease, and then local emergency rooms (and tax payers) will foot the bill. Most importantly, some people most likely will die because they will no longer have access to basic health care. This is not rhetoric or empty of real consequence. The decisions being made in St. Paul in the next few days will have a very real and lasting effect on the most vulnerable among us.

The 2009 legislative session will end at midnight this Monday. Governor Pawlenty has indicated that he will not call a special session. If the budget is not balanced by the beginning of the new fiscal year (July 1st), the Governor will have the authority to reduce spending and cancel programs altogether at his discretion.

It is essential that Governor Pawlenty, the Speaker of the House and your State Representative hear from you **TODAY**.

Recommended Action:

- Tell the Governor (651-296-3391) that you are asking him to protect General Assistance Medical Care from cuts.
- Tell Speaker Kelliher (651-296-0171) that Minnesota must continue fighting for the most vulnerable and the services like GAMC that serve them.
- Tell your Representative that you are strongly opposed to any cuts to GAMC and that you're willing to pay higher taxes, and request that they deliver the same message to Governor Pawlenty. (See <http://www.gis.leg.mn/mapserver/districts/> to find your legislator's contact information).