



Sowers of Justice

Catholic Legislative Network

**Action
Alert**

Ask your legislator and the Governor to protect the Health Care Access Fund!

March 24, 2008

Background:

In Minnesota's current budget crisis, legislators and Governor Pawlenty have been struggling to find ways to solve the \$935 million budget shortfall without raising taxes. Unfortunately for low-income Minnesotans who rely upon MinnesotaCare or other state programs for health care, the Governor has proposed to transfer funds from the Health Care Access Fund (HCAF) to the general fund.

The use of HCAF money to help close the budget gap means that fewer dollars will be available to provide low-cost health care for working Minnesotans, which was the purpose for which HCAF was created.

The Office for Social Justice's legislative agenda advocates for the legislature to ensure that HCAF be used solely to fund health care related programs, and that it not be used to make up for the budget shortfall.

However, the Governor's budget does just the opposite. Overall, the Health Care Access Fund will contribute \$399 million to the deficit fix.

In human terms, this means that:

- 20,000 kids will become uninsured if their parents earn enough to transition off of Medicaid to MinnesotaCare.
- An estimated 10,000 Minnesotans will remain uninsured due to an elimination of outreach grants.
- Nearly 1,000 adults will not get access to health coverage through a planned increase in eligibility for MinnesotaCare.

Tough decisions will be made this session on how to overcome our state's budget shortfall, but it is imperative that the faith community stands in solidarity with struggling Minnesotans as our budget priorities are being set.

Recommended Action:

Contact Governor Pawlenty and your state legislators, and encourage them **not** to use funds from the Health Care Access Fund to balance the budget.

Contact Governor Pawlenty: (651) 296-3391 or tim.pawlenty@state.mn.us

Find and contact your State Representative: (651) 296-2146

Find and contact your State Senator: (651) 296-0504

FFI: Contact Adam Robinson at 651-291-4536

or

Patrick Ness at 651-291-4484