

Press Release
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400 Health Care Providers Deliver Letter to Legislature Protesting Cuts to MassHealth

Calling for the protection of MassHealth, the Commonwealth's Medicaid program, and other public health insurance programs in the Fiscal Year 2004 state budget, the Providers in Defense of MassHealth, a group of more than 400 doctors, nurses and therapists from across the state, delivered a letter today to the Massachusetts Legislature as well to the Governor and key administration officials. Those who signed this letter practice in a variety of settings including community health centers, urban and rural clinics, academic medical centers and community hospitals.

"As physicians, the proposed cuts to MassHealth are deeply alarming to us. Our everyday experience reminds us how critical health coverage is to low-income families, and deferring needed medical care runs counter to medical advice. Cuts to MassHealth will not prevent our patients from seeking care. Rather, these cuts will force them into hospital emergency departments with acute conditions, or conditions that have worsened due to an inability come to us for primary care. Both of these scenarios are much worse for our patients and far more costly to the state," said Dr. Madeleine Biondolillo, Executive Director of the Urban Medical Group in Jamaica Plain.

The providers acknowledge the Commonwealth's current economic woes and the subsequent difficult decisions necessary in these dire times. However, they remain steadfast that the protection of MassHealth and its sister programs remain a priority.

"If MassHealth is not adequately funded, the livelihoods of our neediest residents will be significantly compromised. We, as a state, need to ensure quality and affordable health care for our vulnerable families, children and seniors. In order to achieve this goal, the state must consider raising revenues," added Paulajoy Savastano, L.P.N., Lowell Community Health Center.

The Providers in Defense of MassHealth was formed in March. This group has undertaken a variety of activities including letters to the editor, op-eds, and personal visits to legislators and other policy makers. Those interested in joining this effort should contact Health Care For All at 617.275.2919.

