

## Last Chance to Oppose Federal Medicaid Cuts

In what is expected to be a very close vote, the U.S. House will vote today, Wednesday, February 1, on budget reconciliation--whether to cut billions in essential services. There is still time to call 1-800-426-8073 (courtesy of American Friend's Committee) and ask to speak with your representative's office. If the lines are busy, please be patient and try again, or visit <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm> to find contact information for your Congressional representative.

If it passes, budget reconciliation would do many bad things, including cutting short Katrina health care benefits for many evacuees in Texas, as well as slashing billions of dollars from Medicaid, child support enforcement, child care, foster care, Medicare, disability assistance, student loans, and other vital services for families to help fund \$70 billion in new tax cuts. The reconciliation bill would also reauthorize the federal welfare block grant (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) through fiscal year 2010, but with changes to the program that could hurt Texas.

In terms of Medicaid cuts, according to just-released data from Congress' own budget analysts (CBO), the bill's Medicaid changes would: 1) increase co-payments and premiums, 2) allow states to reduce health care services, and 3) establish highly restrictive asset-transfer rules for people needing nursing home care.

Some key CBO estimates:

- Some 80 percent of the budget cuts that would result from Medicaid co-payment increases would come from enrollees who won't receive the health care they need because they can't afford the co-payments.
- 65,000 individuals would lose Medicaid coverage entirely because they will be unable to afford new premiums. Children will account for 60 percent of the individuals who are unable to pay their premiums and are therefore denied Medicaid coverage.
- Around 15 percent of new Medicaid nursing home coverage recipients each year would ultimately face delays of up to one year in obtaining coverage as a result of the new rules.

Read more at

<http://www.cbpp.org/1-29-06health.htm>

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