

## Governor's New Plan Does Not Fix the GAMC Problem

Governor Pawlenty and the Department of Human Services recently announced their decision to automatically move enrollees of General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) into Transitional MinnesotaCare when funding for GAMC is scheduled to end on March 1, 2010

Unfortunately, this plan only delays the loss of coverage for thousands of vulnerable Minnesotans by a matter of months. It also fails to solve the significant and expensive long-term problems that were created by the governor's line-item veto of General Assistance Medical Care.

The decision to move people from General Assistance Medical Care to Transitional MinnesotaCare means that:

- **Many Minnesotans relying on General Assistance Medical Care will still lose their health care coverage – now at a slightly later date.** Transitional MinnesotaCare is only available to someone for up to six months. After that time, everyone must apply for a renewal to move to regular MinnesotaCare. Historically, less than 25% of GAMC enrollees have been able to successfully transition to MinnesotaCare.
- **The Health Care Access Fund, which finances MinnesotaCare, will go into deficit earlier.** Moving GAMC enrollees into MinnesotaCare will destabilize the Health Care Access Fund and could jeopardize the health care coverage of 100,000+ Minnesotans who currently rely on MinnesotaCare.
- **Patients and hospitals still confront the expensive problem of inadequate hospital coverage.** MinnesotaCare has a \$10,000 cap on hospital care. Half the people turning to GAMC have serious chronic and multiple health problems, which in many instances result in expensive medical care. This subjects individuals to medical debt far beyond their means and will leave hospitals facing millions of dollars in uncompensated care costs.
- **Thousands of Minnesotans who benefit from this program but are not enrolled in GAMC when the program ends March 1 of next year may not be able to access other affordable health coverage.** The Department transfer plan provides up to six months of coverage via transitional MinnesotaCare only to those individuals enrolled in GAMC before March 1, 2010. This will leave out thousands of additional men and women who would have enrolled in GAMC after that date, leaving them struggling to find other health coverage.

The DHS decision is a stop-gap measure that does not eliminate any of the urgency around redesigning GAMC to ensure comprehensive, stable health care coverage for this population, and raising the revenues necessary to achieve that goal. The Legislature must address this issue as its first and immediate priority in 2010.

Minnesota has provided health care coverage to these low-income men and women in our state for thirty-five years. Now is not the time to renege on that commitment.

*To join other interested organizations in the effort to Save GAMC, contact Adam Robinson at 651-291-4536 or [adam@SaveGAMC.org](mailto:adam@SaveGAMC.org).*