



Governor Ted Strickland speaks with Erin and Alan Kleimeyer in Batavia on May 14th

GOVERNOR VISITS LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE MEDICAID FOR PARENTS, CHILDREN

Since May 14th Governor Ted Strickland has visited 13 cities in Ohio to speak with families about their need for health care. He has focused on two proposals he made that the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate removed from his budget. One extends Medicaid to all parents up to 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), adding about 27,000 parents. The other allows parents with incomes over the children's eligibility level to buy into Medicaid for their children.

The Governor has heard from women and men who care for the elderly in nursing homes and home health care agencies, work in retail in the food industry – the many service jobs in our economy that pay low wages and either do not offer health insurance or offer it at a price that is unaffordable to many of its workers. The Governor also heard from families with children with pre-existing conditions or disabilities who have been rejected from private health insurance coverage. Here are just a few of the voices:

Clermont County: *Erin* (photo above) lost her mother to cancer when Erin was seven and her mother was only 33. Erin and her husband Alan have three children. Erin knows the importance of routine check-ups (continued page 2, *Governor*)

What Did the Governor Say?

On Parents: "There are estimated to be about 27,000 parents ...who are working parents but who work for low wages and who work for companies that either cannot...or choose not to provide health insurance coverage for them. It is literally impossible for these working people to buy health insurance on the open market ...and yet they make above 90 percent of the poverty line, and so they don't qualify. And I would like to make it possible for that to be changed... so that these working parents can be covered as well. This is just simply the right thing to do...These are not people who aren't trying. These are working people who are doing the best they can do."

On Children: "What I have proposed in my budget is that we make sure that every child in Ohio has access to affordable health care coverage. We can do this... And we can do it with modest investments...We want to increase the eligibility for that program from the current 200 percent of poverty up to 300 percent of poverty...But I want to go a step further... There are children in families who earn above 300 percent of poverty who are not covered...Let's say that there's a family that is self-employed... They may have a decent income but they may have a child with a pre-existing condition,...a special needs child---and they may find it nearly impossible to find insurance that will cover that child." (Excerpts from Governor's statement, Marion County, May 25, 2007)

(Governor, continued from page 1)

but she can't afford it.

Marion County: *Nigee*, a single mom, makes pizzas earning \$7.25 per hour. Her two sons are covered under their dad's health insurance policy, but Nigee does without health care coverage and health care. When she gets sick the emergency is her only option.

Shelby County: *Dan*, a self-employed homebuilder, and his wife Jayma can't get coverage for their son Jacob, age 10, on his family's health policy because Jacob is a cancer survivor. Their other two children are covered on the policy.

Warren County: *Jeff*, a construction consultant, and Paula can't get their three year old son Seth covered on their family's health insurance policy because Seth has Down syndrome. Their insurer covers their other two children. (Gov., cont'd page 3)

Disability Medical Assistance in Trouble

Disability Medical Assistance (DMA) has been the safety net for the poorest of the poor—persons without dependent children who don't qualify for Medicaid with incomes no higher than \$115/month. Unfortunately, that safety net has a big hole – DMA has been closed to new enrollment for over two years. Before 2005, 30,000+ persons were enrolled in DMA, but that number has slipped to under 5,000 --not because the need has gone away, but because as those on DMA establish Medicaid eligibility or fail to recertify they go off the rolls, but others equally needy cannot come on to the rolls.

\$52 million was initially in the two-year budget for this population. This was enough to cover the present DMA population and provide needed services to indigent, medication dependent Ohioans in a cost-effective way. However, last week \$25 million was diverted to other uses. So not only do we need to speak up for parents and kids, but chronically ill adults who have almost no income. See "Here is What You Can Do."



Here is what you can do!

Let your Senator and Representative know that covering parents and children who can't get health insurance and keeping the Disability Medical Assistance Safety Net is important to you! **Call: 1-800-282-0253 TODAY** and urge your Senator and Representative to support parents, kids and DMA for the poorest of the poor. Don't know who your senator or representative is? Ask when you call the "800" number or go to these links:

Senate: <http://www.senate.state.oh.us/senators/>
House of Representatives: <http://www.house.state.oh.us/jsp/Representatives.jsp>

Where Does the Budget Stand Re Family-Related Medicaid Proposals?

Parents Medicaid (Healthy Families) Governor

Proposed to raise eligibility to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and allocated \$50 million for the two year budget.

House of Representatives

Eliminated the governor's language, and added funding to higher education.

Senate

Did not restore Governor's language

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#### Children's Medicaid (Healthy Start) Governor

Proposed to raise eligibility to 300% of FPL, and to allow parents with incomes above 300% to buy into Medicaid for their uninsured children.

#### House of Representatives

Accepted the increase to 300% FPL, but rejected the provision to all parents at 300+% FPL to buy into Medicaid.

#### Senate

Agreed with Governor and House on increasing eligibility to 300% FPL, but rejected buy-in proposal.

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Pregnant Women (Healthy Start) Governor

House

Proposed to raise eligibility from 150% FPL to 200% FPL.

House: Concurred

Senate: Concurred

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PERCENT” OF POVERTY? The federal poverty levels are adjusted annually. They were created about forty years ago based on the cost of a minimal food budget, multiplied by three—assuming that food made up one-third of a family’s purchases. The FPLs are adjusted annually for cost of living changes. Some federal and state programs now recognize that people may be unable to meet their needs for such things as health care even above 100 percent of the FPL. Here are the 2007 FPL’s:

Family Size	90% (annually)	100% (annually)	200% (annually)	300% (annually)
2	\$12,321	\$13,690	\$27,380	\$41,070
3	\$15,453	\$17,170	\$34,340	\$54,510
4	\$18,585	\$20,650	\$41,300	\$61,950
5	\$21,717	\$24,130	\$48,260	\$72,390

(Governor, continued from page 2)
Steubenville: *Barbara* earns \$6.85 per hour ringing up groceries, but can’t afford to go to the doctor. When she lost her Medicaid following the 2005 policy change reducing eligibility, she stopped taking her medicine for high blood pressure.

Marietta – *Clifford* earns just a little over the current 90 percent eligibility level for Healthy Families Medicaid but it’s enough to keep him and Deborah, mother of their 15 year old daughter, off Medicaid. Deborah has diabetes and needs to borrow money to purchase medication and testing supplies.

Advocates from the Coalition for Affordable Health Care and the Ohio Family Coverage Coalition have worked hard to urge the Senate to restore these provisions to the budget. As of June 13th when the Senate

voted on its version of the budget the two provisions had not been restored, but advocates believe there is a good possibility that as the Senate and House confer on their two version of the budget it can still happen.

Next Steps on the State Budget

Recap
May 1st – Budget was passed by the House
June 13th – Budget was passed by the Senate

Coming Up
Week of June 18th – Conference Committee expected to begin working (representatives from House and Senate meet to reconcile differences in the two budgets they passed).

July 1st – New budget must be in place for the start of the 2008 Fiscal Year.

Get Ready for Hearings

The **House Committee on Healthcare Access and Affordability** is expected to hold public hearings during the month of August. The locations have not yet been determined with certainty, but most likely it will include Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Athens and three other cities.



What is needed to make sure that all Ohioans have health coverage? What is affordable coverage? What issues are most important to small business? To working people with modest incomes? To people with disabilities who haven’t qualified for Medicare and Medicaid? If you have thoughts on any of these issues, or want to learn more about what the Ohio legislature is likely to do about health care reform, you should attending these hearings. If you want to make sure you get information about the hearings, please send an e-mail to crudolph@uhcanohio.org