



# MAINE EQUAL JUSTICE

*Finding solutions to poverty and improving the lives of people with low income in Maine.*

## Federal Government Makes Decision on MaineCare Cuts: *More than 20,000 Low-income Mainers Will NOT Lose Coverage; Others Will*

On January 7th, the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued its long-awaited decision on the Governor's request to eliminate MaineCare coverage for thousands of Mainers.

### Who will be protected?

The following groups will NOT lose their coverage:

- Parents with minor children at home and household income at or below 133% of the federal poverty level [FPL] will keep their MaineCare. This amounts to \$2,116 per month for a family of 3; and
- Young adults ages 19 and 20 years old with household income at or below 150% FPL (\$1,397 per month for a single person) will keep their MaineCare.

### Who will lose coverage?

On March 1, 2013, MaineCare benefits are set to end for many working parents, and some seniors and people with disabilities.

- **Parents—This cut affects two groups of parents differently:**

#### **Group A**

Parents who pay a premium for their children's MaineCare will lose their own MaineCare on March 1, 2013. These are parents with income (after deductions) above 150% of the federal poverty level (\$2,388 per month for a family of 3). Their children will remain on MaineCare.

## **Group B**

Some parents who do not pay a premium for their children will also lose their regular MaineCare. For parents with income above 133% and below 150% of the federal poverty level, regular MaineCare will end on March 1, 2013. For a family of 3, this is a monthly income between \$2,117 and \$2,387 after allowed deductions. The children in these families will keep their MaineCare.

**Important Note For Group B Parents:** If you are in Group B you may be able to keep your MaineCare coverage through the “Transitional MaineCare Program.”

- o You can keep it for an extra 4 months (until July 1<sup>st</sup>) if you get child or spousal support but have no earned income;
- o You can keep it for an extra 6 months (until September 1<sup>st</sup>) if you have earned income from employment or self-employment;
- o You may keep it for a second 6-month period (until March 1, 2014) if your income stays below 185% of the federal poverty level at the end of your first 6 months (\$2,944 per month for a family of 3) and meet other requirements.

Please keep in mind that there are certain “deductions” or “disregards” from parents’ income that should be applied before comparing your income to the amounts listed above. If your income is only slightly higher than the amounts listed above, feel free to contact MEJP to see if these disregards bring you within the income guidelines.

Be sure to tell DHHS if you think you are eligible for Transitional MaineCare.

## **• People 65 and older and those with disabilities who have Medicare**

MaineCare provides help with Medicare costs, including prescription drug costs for some seniors and people with disabilities who do not receive full-benefit MaineCare. This is called the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), sometimes called the “buy-in” program, or referred to by the initials QMB, SLMB or QI.

**Many of the people in this program will NOT lose any benefits at all. But two groups within this program will lose some or all of their benefits.**

### **Group A**

If your monthly income is above \$1,704 for a single person or \$2,307 for a couple, then MaineCare will no longer pay your Medicare Part B premium (\$104.50 per month) beginning March 1, 2013. The Part B premium cost will be taken out of your Social Security check each month.

Beginning, January 1, 2014, people in this group will also stop getting help paying for their Medicare Part D Prescription Drug costs. This means that if you are in this group you will have to pay your:

- o Monthly Medicare Part D premiums. (Some plans charge \$30 or more per month, but others don’t charge any premium.)

- o Yearly Medicare Part D deductible (about \$325 per year).
- o Your drug co-payments will go up. Right now co-payments are less than \$4.00 per drug. The amount of the increase will vary depending on the Part D Plan you are in and the prescription medication you take.
- o If you reach the “donut hole”, your costs for drugs will go even higher.

### **Group B**

If your monthly income is between \$1,379 and \$1,472 (single person) or between \$1,866 and \$1,992 for a couple, MaineCare will keep paying for some costs but will stop paying for others.

MaineCare will keep paying your:

- o Medicare Part B premiums; and
- o All of the costs that it pays now for your prescription drugs and Medicare Part D coverage.

But, beginning March 1, 2013 MaineCare will stop paying:

- o Medicare Part A deductible (\$1,184 per benefit period) if you are hospitalized or need skilled nursing care;
- o Medicare Part A Hospital Co-payment (\$296 per day for days 61-90);
- o Skilled Nursing (\$148 per day for days 21-100);
- o Medicare Part B deductible (\$147 per year); and
- o Medicare Part B co-insurance. Medicare pays 80% of the cost of most outpatient medical services (e.g. physician visits) and MaineCare has been paying the other 20%.

### **For more information:**

Parents can call Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) at (800) 977-6740

Seniors or individuals with disabilities can call DHHS at (800) 442-6003

If you have questions, please contact Maine Equal Justice at (866) 626-7059 to speak with Chris Rusnov at ext. 204 or Crystal Bond at ext. 205.