

# Low-Income Women and Children Without Health Insurance

High numbers of low-income women and children in the United States are not covered by health insurance, according to a recent report on maternal and child health care presented to the American Public Health Association.

In 1984:

- Thirty-six percent of the 9.5 million poor women in the U.S., and 30 percent of America's 5.1 million near-poor women of child-bearing age were uninsured.

- One-third of all poor children and 29 percent of all near-poor children under age 18 were uninsured.

- Three-quarters of the uninsured were workers and their dependents.
- Between 1978 and 1984, the total number of uninsured in the United States grew from 28 million to over 35 million.

The study points to several causes for the growing problem:

- The increased prevalence of low paying jobs with low wages and no health benefits.

- Growing unemployment.
- Increased divorce and out-of-wedlock childbearing, resulting in single-parent headed families, which are significantly more likely to be uninsured.
- Declining employer support for their employees' job-related health insurance costs.
- Lowered Medicaid eligibility levels due to the cutbacks in welfare benefits beginning in the early 1970's.
- Cutbacks in public health programs since 1981.

In 1983, nearly half of all Black children and more than a third of all Latino children were poor. Poverty among families headed by young women of color is astronomical—85 percent for families headed by young Black women and 70.6 percent for families headed by Latinos, according to a 1985 report by the Children's Defense Fund.

Lack of access to health care, particularly prenatal care, among women of childbearing age contributes directly to the infant mortality (death between birth and one year) and postneonatal mortality (deaths between birth

and 28 days) rates. Between 1982 and 1983, the postneonatal mortality rate among Black infants increased by five percent, while the rate in the overall population increased three percent.

Medicaid, the main source of health insurance for the nation's poor, served only 46 percent of those below the poverty level in 1984, down from the 65 percent who received such coverage in 1976. Even among poor children, only about one half were covered by Medicaid for the full year during 1984. The primary reason for this low rate of coverage is that many of those who are officially poor nevertheless have incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid. In 1986 the average income cutoff for Medicaid eligibility was less than half of the poverty level.

Recently passed federal legislation (the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1986 or COBRA) does mandate additional Medicaid coverage for young children and pregnant women.

## Rev. Watley, Bethel A.M.E. Pastor, Passes

The Rev. Dr. Matthew A. Watley, Pastor, Bethel, A.M.E. Church, Portland, Oregon, passed early Wednesday morning at St. Vincent Hospital in Portland.

Rev. Watley, Pastor of Bethel since 1979, was an instrumental force in the continuing momentum the church has experienced in civic and community leadership as well as spiritual guidance.



Dr. Watley, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, is survived by his wife Marian; and a son, the Rev. Dr. William Watley, Pastor, St. James A.M.E. Church, Newark, N.J.; two grandchildren; and a host of brothers; other family members and friends.

Services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 23rd, 1987, at Bethel A.M.E. Church, 5828 N.E. 8th.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by Vanns Funeral Directors.

## "New Attitudes Fashion Show"

The Pacific Northwest Bell-sponsored Black Employees Telecommunications Association presents "New Attitudes Fashion Show". The show is scheduled for Sunday, May 24, 1987, 5:00 p.m., at the Royal Esquire Club, 17th and Northeast Alberta, Portland.

A donation of \$5.00 is requested and a fund raiser of \$1.00 for a chance for a \$50.00, \$75.00 and \$100.00 savings bond is also included. The proceeds will be for scholarships for our local area graduating seniors.

The public is cordially invited. Please join with the Black Employees Telecommunications Association in helping to support educational advancement for our local youth.

## Family Business Conference

The Family Business Program at Oregon State University will hold its annual conference, Managing the Family-Owned Business, at OSU in Corvallis, June 2-4, 1987. The conference, featuring nationally-known experts, will consider such topics as succession, transfer of ownership, conflict, and power in the family business. Preregistration is required.

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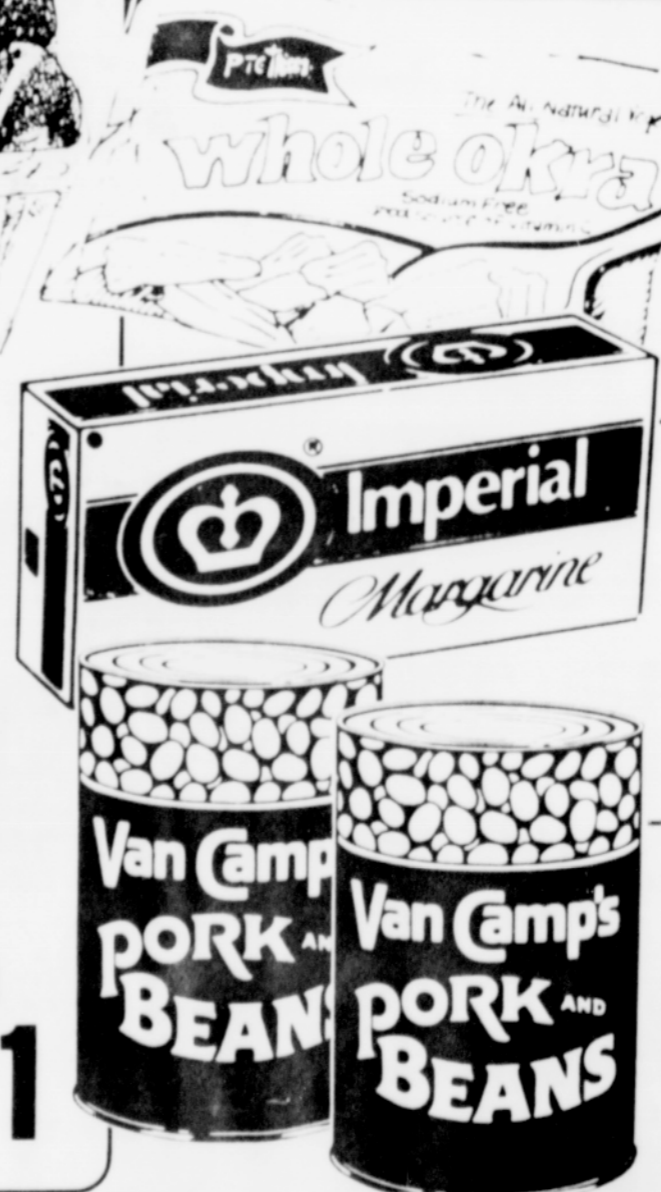
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