

## Health Care/A Hidden Cost

the class of those who can be served under Medicaid. Again, a premium charge is added which the employer pays or shares with the employee. Businesses with 25 or fewer employees should be targeted for this approach.

3. REQUIRE ALL STATES TO EXTEND MEDICAID COVERAGE TO PARENTS OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN FAMILIES WITH INCOMES BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL.

The population most likely to benefit from this approach is the two-parent family, which provides another option for addressing the needs of the working poor. Under this scenario, states choosing to extend Medicaid coverage to eligible two-parent families would receive increased federal matching funds for the first five years of the program. In exchange, these states would analyze the number of people participating and would develop ways to extend coverage to these new Medicaid recipients.

After five years, the interim federal funds would be eliminated in favor of the programs implemented by the state.

### CONCLUSION

Today, the cost of health care frustrates all of us. We wonder why a room in a hospital is priced higher than a room in a hotel suite, why a journey by ambulance is more than one in a limousine. The

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invisible cost of providing health care to the uninsured is one reason. Why? Because when people defer care until their illnesses are so bad they cannot go on with their

lives, then the cost of treating them rises. Since they can't pay, THE BILL FOR PROVIDING ACUTE CARE IS PASSED ON AS AN "INVISIBLE" EXPENSE TO THOSE OF US WHO ARE INSURED. Because these fees are hidden, we are unable to give either our advice or consent. We simply pay through higher insurance premiums. But there is something we can do! The first step is to make our elected officials at the state and national level aware of our concern. Solutions are possible. WE NEED THE LEGISLATIVE WILL!

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