

# ACTION ALERT

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DECEMBER 08, 2011

### GOVERNOR PROPOSES DEEP CUTS TO SOCIAL WELFARE SAFETY NET PROGRAMS

As you probably heard, yesterday the Governor released proposals in a 2012-2013 Supplemental Budget targeting DHHS that would decimate programs and services across the State. I have attached a summary of many of these proposals (the summary is long because there are so many proposed cuts). We have faced alarming budget cut proposals many times in the past but these are truly of unprecedented proportion and will have dire consequences for thousands of Maine people in need.

I spoke with Steve Letourneau, Catholic Charities Maine CEO, this morning and he reports that CCME's initial assessment is that: cuts to the child care voucher program would affect the majority of families who utilize the child care program in Portland and Biddeford. St. Francis Recovery Program will have to close, and there will be cuts to Medicaid funding for adults who use the Jessie Albert Dental Center. More negative impact may well surface as their analysis continues.

The diocese will lobby the Appropriations Committee aggressively for alternative resolution to the shortfalls in the DHHS budget. The committee meets next week to review the recommendations. The more people who speak out in opposition to the cuts the more likely that they will be overturned.

Marc R. Mutty

Proposals in the Supplemental 2012-2013 Budget

#### PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

---

##### Proposed Cuts to Eliminate MaineCare Eligibility for Multiple Groups:

- **Working Parents (21,000 Maine people):** The complete elimination of eligibility for MaineCare for approximately 21,000 parents between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
  - **Childless Adults (approximately 18,000 Maine people):** The complete elimination of MaineCare coverage for non-disabled adults between the ages of 21 and 64 without children living at home living under the federal poverty level.
  - **Young Adults (over 7,000 Maine people):** The complete elimination of MaineCare coverage for over 7,000 young adults (age 19 and 20) under 150% of the federal poverty level.
- 

##### Proposed Cuts to Medical Assistance for the Elderly and People with Disabilities:

- **Prescription Drug and Health Care Assistance for People over 65 and People with Disabilities:** Approximately 72,000 seniors and people with disabilities would lose some or all assistance they currently receive to pay for Medicare and/or prescription drug costs. Of the 72,000, over 20,000 (with incomes between 135-185% FPL) will lose all assistance they currently receive through the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for Medicare premiums, co-payments and deductibles, prescription drug costs, and coverage through the so-called "donut hole". The remainder, approximately 52,000 people, will lose some assistance with Medicare and/or prescription drug costs.
- **Prescription Drug Assistance for Certain People over 62 and People with Disabilities:** Approximately 5,000-6,000 low-income older adults (over age 62) and people with disabilities who do not have Medicare will lose all assistance they currently receive to

### **Proposed Cuts to MaineCare Services:**

- **Services for all MaineCare adult members:** The elimination of a significant number of services for MaineCare members including the following services:
    - Adult Family Care;
    - Ambulatory Surgical Center;
    - Chiropractic;
    - Consumer Attendant Services;
    - Dental;
    - Occupation Therapy;
    - Physical Therapy;
    - Podiatry;
    - Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinics;
    - Targeted Case Management; and
    - Vision.
  - **Services for Extremely Vulnerable Populations:** The closure of all Private Non-Medical Institutions (residential homes or boarding homes) leaving approximately 6000 people, including seniors and adults with severe and persistent mental illness, without a place to live and needed personal care services.
  - **Other cuts to MaineCare services including:**
    - Limit **out-patient hospital visits to 15 visits a year regardless of health status;**
    - **Limit in-patient hospital stays to 5 stays a year regardless of health status;**
    - Limit coverage for brand name prescription drugs from 4 to only 2 per month; and
    - Limit on Suboxone for the treatment of opioid dependency to coverage for a two-year period.
- 

### **Proposed cuts to services for Children and Families:**

- **Young Children and their Parents:** The elimination of all state funding for the Head Start Program, which will force programs across the state to cut a total of 235 children off the program. Head Start provides early care and education, as well as health, nutrition, mental health, social and family support to low-income families with children from prenatal to five years old.
- **Working Parents:** Cuts almost half of all funding for the Child Care Subsidy Program. This will lead to a deep cut in the availability of child care vouchers for families with incomes below 250% FPL. The child care subsidy program helps parents with low income to afford the child care they need in order to work.
- **Other cuts to services for children and families including:**
  - **Cut the Family Reunification Program that keeps families intact and housed;**
  - **Cut the funding for Wrap-Around ME that assists children (ages 5-18) with serious emotional or behavioral issues;**
  - **Cut the Alternative Response Program that provides case management for children at risk of abuse or neglect;**
  - **Cut Crisis Services for people experiencing mental health-related crises; and**

**Cut services for children with serious emotional or behavioral issues living in residential setting**

# URGENT ALERT

## A Statement of Conscience on Proposed Cuts to Public Benefits Programs

*Send Governor LePage a message asking him to prioritize Maine's poorest citizens*

"Justice in health care should be a priority of governments and international institutions." – Pope Benedict XVI  
<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1004736.htm>

The Governor's office has released a set of proposed cuts to programs such as Mainecare that will mean tens of thousands of Mainers may lose health coverage. There are other proposed cuts to public benefits programs as well.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, in coalition with The Maine Council of Churches and others will be in Augusta to voice our shared objection to cutting programs that are so critical to low-income Mainers, including many working individuals and families. Those of us in faith communities know from direct experience that many more of our neighbors in Maine are facing deepening challenges to keep warm this winter, to put food on the table and to keep sheltered and healthy.

**Please read and sign-on to the Statement of Conscience on Proposed Cuts to Public Benefits Programs below.** We are trying to collect as many signatures as possible, of clergy and other religious leaders, and people of all faiths, **by next Tuesday, December 13, 2011.** This statement will be presented as testimony to the Joint Committee on Appropriations at its hearings on the proposed cuts on December 14th and 15th.

Excerpt from the Statement:

Long ago, the prophet Isaiah spoke the word of the LORD, saying, "*is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice. . . Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly . . .*" Isaiah 58:6-8.

As people of faith, we believe that since we are called by ancient Scripture, tradition and faith to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to welcome the "alien and the stranger in our midst," then we must treat all our neighbors as members of our own family -- "our own kin."

**Click on the attached link to see the statement in its entirety and sign on:**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/V2TV65K>

**Sign today to add your name to this statement and forward to others you believe will be willing to add their voice to this important message.**

### ACTION IN AUGUSTA:

The Joint Committee on Appropriations will hold hearings in Room 228 at the State House on Wednesday (12/14), Thursday (12/15) and Friday (12/16) on the Governor's proposed cuts and changes to MaineCare and other programs affecting thousands of Maine children and adults, including many seniors.

**The Maine Council of Churches will be hosting a Prayer Vigil for a Moral Budget on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (Dec. 14, 15 & 16) at the State House. Representatives of the Diocese will be participating in this Vigil.**

**IF YOU CANNOT COME TO AUGUSTA:** please consider joining us in prayer, wherever you are, from Noon to 12:15 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

**For those who will be joining us at the State House, please review the following information:**

*(Clergy of all faiths are invited to wear stoles, collars or other symbols and vestments as appropriate to your tradition.)*

**Wednesday, December 14, 10:00 a.m.**

1. Join us for the **Maine Can Do Better Rally in the Hall of Flags** at the State House.
2. **“Prayer Vigil for a Moral Budget”** begins immediately after the rally ends, in the Hall of Flags and continues until 2 p.m.

This will be an informal prayer vigil, for people of all faiths, to pray for the Appropriations Committee and to pray that they will be moved to approve a state budget that is just and compassionate for all Mainers, particularly our most vulnerable neighbors.

**1:00 p.m. -- The Prayer Vigil for a Moral Budget moves to the Welcome Center at the State House.**

4. **Testimony before the Joint Committee on Appropriations** – sometime in the afternoon, Marc Mutty, lobbyist for the Diocese will testify before the Committee. You may also sign up that day to give testimony (3 min.). Contact Marc if you are interested in this opportunity

**Thursday, December 15 and Friday, December 16  
Prayer Vigil Continues**

**Thursday -- Noon to 2p.m. – Maine Council of Churches will host the Prayer Vigil for a Moral Budget at the Welcome Center at the State House.** For those who wish to help maintain a prayerful presence all day, the room is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Friday, Noon – 2 p.m. -- Maine Council of Churches will host the Prayer Vigil for a Moral Budget in the Hall of Flags.** For those who wish to help maintain a prayerful presence all day, the room is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Marc R. Mutty at [marc.mutty@portlanddiocese.org](mailto:marc.mutty@portlanddiocese.org)