

AMEND THE NC HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES (HCWD) ACT TO KEEP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING

ACTION NEEDED

Insert a special provision in the NC Budget that strikes the \$50 annual fee to local Departments of Social Services for individuals who participate in HCWD and have countable income greater than one hundred fifty percent (150%) and less than or equal to two hundred percent (200%). A fee cannot be collected because of the Maintenance of Effort requirements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

WITHOUT THIS PROVISION, THE DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WILL NOT IMPLEMENT THE LAW PASSED BY THE NC GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 2005.

CURRENT STATUS:

As of February 2010, 996 individuals attained medical coverage through the HCWD. This is 200 individuals less than the best projections estimated would join the first year of the program. The report, **"Projecting the Cost of Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities, A new Medicaid program in North Carolina,"** projects that, among people with income above 150 percent of poverty, 200 people would enroll in the first year of the program, but the lead author has revisited this projection and suggests it would be closer to 50 people if implemented this year.

IN 2008, ADVOCATES HAD TO ASK NCGA TO INSERT A SPECIAL PROVISION FOR A MANDATORY IMPLEMENTATION DATE. A 2010 SPECIAL PROVISION FULFILLS THE PROMISE OF THE ORIGINAL STATUTE.

BACKGROUND

In 1999 the passage of the Ticket To Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act gave states the option to expand Medicaid to cover working adults with disabilities with earnings above the typical threshold, called a buy-in option. North Carolina passed legislation to implement Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities (HCWD) in response to this opportunity (NC Session Law 2005-276). Enrollees must be employed and pay fees based on their total countable income. Those with income above 150 percent of poverty pay an annual \$50 enrollment fee. Those with income above 200 percent of poverty pay a monthly premium, based on a sliding scale.