

THE BASIC HEALTH PLAN

Recommendation: The Seattle/King County VOP Committee recommends that Vincentians speak up **IN SUPPORT** of retention of the Basic Health Plan in the State Budget.

Background:

The Basic Health program is a critical part of our health care safety net.

Basic Health is the only affordable option for individuals who are self employed or whose employer doesn't offer coverage. It remains a lifeline for over 65,000 people still enrolled, even after the program suffered drastic cuts last year.

Unfortunately, over 87,500 people on the waiting list are shut out of this important program for the foreseeable future.

The Problem:

The Governor's proposed no-revenue budget would entirely eliminate Basic Health. The Governor's second proposed budget, which assumes new revenue, would keep Basic Health as is. There are no House or Senate budget proposals yet.

The Needs of Those We Serve:

The uninsured have few options for receiving care and often end up seeking primary care in costly hospital emergency rooms. We all pay for this in the form of higher insurance premiums.

The rapidly growing uninsured population profoundly increases the burden on the primary care delivery system which includes community health clinics. As they see more uninsured patients and revenues continue to decline, these clinics are challenged to keep their doors open.

The Solution with the Legislature:

New state revenue must be part of the solution to keep Basic Health viable. Federal dollars should reduce the amount of state revenue that may need to be raised, but these funds are still uncertain. Meanwhile, it is critical to raise revenues this year to avoid an even larger budget deficit next year.

If Congress provides our state extra money for health care, it needs to be spent on health care.

What you can do:

Please contact your legislators and State Senator and ask them to do all in their power to at the very least maintain the Basic Health Care Plan.