

## **MMPI Budget Bulletin**

### **The FY 2006 Massachusetts Medicaid Budget Senate Ways and Means Proposal**

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means issued its FY 2006 budget proposal on May 17. In general, the MassHealth provisions of the Senate's \$24 billion budget are comparable to the budget recently passed by the House of Representatives, though it is somewhat more expansive in several respects. The Senate budget calls for \$7.4 billion to be spent on MassHealth-related programs. The deadline for filing amendments is Thursday, May 19, and floor debate is set to begin on May 23.

For details on the MassHealth provisions in the Senate Ways & Means budget, please read the analyses done by our colleagues at

[Massachusetts Law Reform Institute](#)

[Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center](#)

The Senate budget proposal itself is at [www.mass.gov/legis/06budget/senate/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/legis/06budget/senate/index.htm).

A number of items in the Senate budget suggest a general policy direction of making MassHealth somewhat more available, in order to help reduce the number of Massachusetts residents without health insurance. For example:

- The budget anticipates an enrollment increase of 26,000 people during FY 2006, which would bring total enrollment to over 1 million.
- The budget includes some modest restorations of benefits
  - Dental and smoking cessation coverage for pregnant women and mothers of young children
  - Coverage under MassHealth Essential for 3,500 elderly or disabled legal immigrants (this is also part of the House budget)
- The budget proposes lifting or removing some enrollment limits
  - There is sufficient funding proposed (\$22 million more than in the House budget) to support an additional 10,000 MassHealth essential enrollees
  - An outside section repeals the authorization of enrollment caps for the CommonHealth, HIV and Insurance Partnership programs
  - Full funding is proposed for the HIV, Breast & Cervical Cancer, and Insurance Partnership programs (this is also part of the House budget).

The budget also includes \$250,000 for MassHealth outreach grants. This is the same amount as Governor Romney proposed in his budget plan, and half of what was passed by the House. A separate supplemental budget bill, associated with the "Act Providing for Health Access, Affordability and Accountability" bill (S. 2042) now pending in the Senate, calls for \$3 million for outreach.