



Medicaid Enrollees

SPEAK UP

Senate District: 24 (Sen. R. Okerlund)
House District: 70 (Rep. K. McIff)

For this Richfield family, eyeglasses and dental coverage are something they can't live, or work without...

Optional Services Are Not Optional

Amy and Edwin Benson are the proud parents of 6 children. The whole family is enrolled on Medicaid. Amy wears glasses; without them she is legally blind. "I can't even get dressed without my glasses on," explains Amy. Without coverage for eyeglasses, she spends \$500 just for the cheapest frames. "I can't control how my vision degrades. Sometimes I need new lenses once every two years and sometimes it is every six months. It's a big expense."

Edwin Benson is the working member of the family. He recently had an infection from an abscessed tooth. Medicaid doesn't cover dental work for adults. Without dental coverage, he doesn't have access to a dentist. As the pain got worse (and more expensive to treat) their children's dentist agreed to see him. The Benson's were forced to put the antibiotics and fillings on their credit card.



"We are trying to do what's best for our family and take as little from the government as we can. But the lack of coverage for preventative care makes things worse and costs everyone more in the long run."—Amy Benson

A Policy Solution: Restore Funding for Optional Services

During the 2008 Special Session, the Legislature cut five 'optional' services for adults on Medicaid, resulting in a savings of \$500,000. Although the fiscal note is relatively low, the cost for those patients who lost these services is very high.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides our state with the resources to restore funding to these critical services. These services—eye glasses, outpatient physical and occupational therapy, speech and hearing—provide vital care for low-income people. Glasses allow a person to be able to drive to work and perform their job. Physical and occupational therapy allow a person to fully recover from an accident and return to work. Example after example shows how health and productivity are increased when patients have access to this care. Please restore funding for these vital services.