

Appleseed This Week

Nebraska Appleseed Challenges Unfair Medicaid Policies

July 31, 2008 - Nebraska Appleseed continues to launch its attack against statewide health care problems, filing a petition this week that calls for a change in policy that penalizes working Nebraskans. The petition requests that the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services abolish a rule that prevents low-income families from receiving health care because they work too many hours.

The "100 hour rule" prevents certain two-parent families that work more than 100 hours total per month from receiving health care assistance through Medicaid, Nebraska's health insurance program for low-income families, children, and elderly and disabled adults. Nebraska Appleseed's petition proposes that parents who meet program requirements remain eligible without a maximum work hour limit.

"The 100 hour rule discourages parents from returning to work and earning more family income," said **Erin Ching**, Nebraska Appleseed staff attorney. "It also treats two-parent families unfairly, since the rule does not apply to single parents." The law was once implemented nationwide, but was relaxed on the federal level in 1998 in response to widespread agreement that the rule was unfair. At that time, the Nebraska Legislature responded by removing the 100 hour rule from most of the Medicaid program, but left the rule in place for certain two-parent families.

"It is time to remove this unnecessary barrier to health care assistance and instead foster policies that make Medicaid what it should be -- a program that encourages health, work and family unity," said **Becky Gould**, executive director of Nebraska Appleseed. The Medicaid program assists 107,838 working families statewide, while expenditures on adults make up only 8.8 percent of total Medicaid costs.

In recent months Nebraska Appleseed has challenged other unfair state Medicaid practices. The Center filed a class action lawsuit in May, challenging the state's authority to remove medical assistance from low-income families. The suit asserts that the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services overstepped its bounds by removing vital Medicaid health care coverage from families who fail to fully meet work requirements under Nebraska's welfare-to-work program known as Employment First. Nebraska Appleseed will argue that case on September 4.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

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