

[Weather](#) [News+](#) [Obituaries+](#) [Sports+](#) [Life+](#) [Entertainment+](#) [Opinion](#) [Extras](#)

FamilyCare enrollees in limbo, impacts 4,000

 April 20, 2009, 10:53 am [BOOKMARK](#) [Print](#) [Email](#)
[Comment on this story](#) | [Print this story](#) | [Email this story](#)

By **Kevin Lee** The Daily Journal Springfield Bureau
(217) 524-5797
Sng2@springnet1.com

SPRINGFIELD -- A new law signed by Gov. Pat Quinn this month leaves 4,000 parents in health-care limbo, largely to rectify the failure of former Gov. Rod Blagojevich to get legislative approval prior to making them eligible.

Earlier this month, Quinn formalized income limits for a state health care program known as FamilyCare.

Blagojevich was removed from office in January. Among the impeachment counts was that during his time in office, he violated the state constitution by broadening the eligibility of the healthcare program without first gaining legislative approval.

Since 2007, FamilyCare has provided health insurance through funding from Medicaid, a jointly funded state-federal program. It covers some adults who have children in the separate All Kids program.

Under the new law, parents or primary caretakers in a family of four would be eligible for FamilyCare, as long as the family's total income did not surpass \$38,200, or 185 percent of the federal poverty level for 2007.

Blagojevich had hiked the income limit to \$82,600.

Jon Bouman, president of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law in Chicago, said the new law would bring some closure to the FamilyCare debate.

"I think this is an important step to settle down the FamilyCare program, bring it out of a year-and-a-half warfare between Blagojevich and the General Assembly," said. "It makes sure that innocent beneficiaries and providers of health care services, get paid for the services they provided."

Ill-timed initiative

Bonnie Schaafsma, an administrator for the Kankakee County Health Department, said Blagojevich's expansion of FamilyCare was ill-timed because of the state's inability to reimburse its medical providers at the time.

"It was difficult to justify adding more people to the program when you're already having trouble meeting the bills," she said. "Why expand a program when you can't pay for the ones already on it?"

According to documents provided by the state Department of Healthcare and Family Services, almost 734,000 people are enrolled in FamilyCare.

Enrollees at risk

But 4,000 enrollees are at risk because their income exceeds the 185 percent limit of the new law. These enrollees applied when Blagojevich expanded the program.

Jim Duffett, executive director for Campaign for Better Health Care in Champaign, said that there is already a resolution between the state and medical providers.

"My understanding is that... the governor's office and the provider community have agreed to provide health insurance until the legislature passes a bill to officially allow them in," he said. "Providers will continue to get reimbursed so long as someone is on FamilyCare."

Robert Caro, a Riverside attorney who filed a lawsuit against Blagojevich for expanding the healthcare program, said that an informal agreement between the governor and healthcare providers would not hold legal weight. The action by the governor is illegal, he said, noting that only the legislature could determine whether or not the 4,000

Today's Most Read Stories

- [Police Blotter April 22 \(Local News\)](#)
- [Foreclosure — Family tried to claim belongings \(Local News\)](#)
- [Web exclusive: Seniors envious of future BBCHS addition \(Local News\)](#)
- [County moves on messy pile \(Local News\)](#)
- [Actor Danny Glover to make appearance \(Entertainment\)](#)

Additional Stories

- [Colonel Shaver -- Overblown bailout hysteria \(Editorials\)](#)
- [High school baseball boxscores \(Sports\)](#)
- [Summertime -- Promote your events FREE! \(Life\)](#)
- [High school, college and semipro schedules \(Sports\)](#)
- [Carolyn Hax -- Other woman not so villainous \(Life\)](#)
- [Track and field -- Bradley's Higgins sets new school record \(Sports\)](#)
- [The God Squad -- Controlling passions not easy at any age \(Life\)](#)
- [High school baseball roundup -- Boilers knock down Porters \(Sports\)](#)
- [In the Kitchen with Deb -- Cracking the code \(Life\)](#)
- [Girls' soccer boxscores \(Sports\)](#)



Vito's Pizzeria and Pub
(815) 932-3511

Armour Road, Bourbonnais, IL 60914

NEWSPAPER ADS

AGRICULTURE

Nurseries

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Memorials (11) ,
Announcements &
Corrections (4) , City And
Public Notices (3) , View
More ...

AUTOMOTIVE & VEHICLES

Auto Dealers (10) , Auto
Manufacturers , Auto
Repair & Services

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Banks & Lenders (3) ,
Accounting , Financial
Planning & Education ,
View More ...

COMMUNITY

Community Events (6) ,
Worship (2) , Charity &
Volunteer Groups , View
More ...

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

Night Clubs & Bars (7) ,
Restaurants (2) , Sporting
Events (2) , View More ...

HOME IMPROVEMENT & GARDENING

Contractors & Remodeling
(3) , Building Materials ,
Heat & Air Conditioning ,
View More ...

MEDICAL

Hearing (3) , Hospitals
(3) , Dentistry &
Orthodontics (2) , View
More ...

REAL ESTATE & RENTALS

Houses & Homes (2)

RECREATION

Crafts & Hobbies , Golf
Resorts , Movies

[VIEW MORE >](#)

enrollees could keep their benefits.

Duffett said lawmakers are working on a new bill that would formally allow the 4,000 parents and caretakers who applied for Blagojevich's expanded FamilyCare to maintain their state-subsidized care.

There would be restrictions -- if parents' income rose above 400 percent of the federal poverty level, or accepted a job that provided health insurance, eligibility would end.

But state Sen. Mike Jacobs, D-East Moline, said he doesn't believe these people should maintain their health benefits as a result of a legal misstep made by Blagojevich.

"Government's job is to protect the most vulnerable among us -- seniors who can't help themselves and also children who are in a desperate and dire situation. If you're an able-bodied person, you should provide health insurance for you and your family. If you can't, you need to go back to school and get educated so that you can," he said.

But Duffett said these individuals cannot be faulted for applying to a program that at the time they thought was legal.

"This is a very weird situation. This law to help these parents maintain their FamilyCare is the right thing to do. These 4,000 people should be the exception," he said.

Davis thinks that the state should raise more revenue through increasing taxes so that middle-income parents have access to state-subsidized health care.

"I know how expensive hospital bills are. I'm barely making it now," she said. "I think it's a good idea to try and expand health care because it's better for everybody."

[Print this story](#)

There are 10 comments - [Display all comments](#)

[Illinois Health Plans](#)

GoHealth Makes it Fast and Easy to Find an Affordable Health Plan!

www.GoHealthInsurance.com

[Cheap Health Insurance](#)

Single just \$99, Family only \$249. Approval guaranteed.

Call today.

TheBestHealthInsuranceValue.com

[Health Insurance](#)

Losing your health coverage? We're here to help you.

www.getmednow.com

[Low Income Healthcare](#)

Healthcare insurance as low as \$4/day. Call

1-866-779-8466 Free!

www.Vimo.com

Ads by Google