

Expanding Pennsylvania's adultBasic Program

- The number of uninsured Pennsylvanians has grown to more than 1 million people and that number is increasing every day. Since 2000, 562,000 adults have lost employer-sponsored health insurance, more than any other state except Michigan.
- Because of the worsening economic situation facing our families, Governor Rendell is proposing expanding access to health care by increasing the number of people in adultBasic to 90,000. The administration remains willing to work with the legislature to expand insurance coverage for more people.
- Administered by the Insurance Department, adultBasic is Pennsylvania's program that provides insurance to adults. It is similar to CHIP Cover All Kids, except it is funded by enrollee premiums and state funds without the benefit of federal funds.
- Approximately 46,000 people receive adultBasic coverage and there are 180,000 on the adultBasic waiting list. Those on the waiting list have met the program's eligibility requirements, but there isn't money to offer them insurance coverage.
- The waiting list for adultBasic is growing much faster than any time in its history. Just 10 months ago, there were 90,000 on the waiting list – meaning it has doubled in size in less than one year.
- The state will pursue federal matching funds to help fund the expansion. Many other states use available federal dollars to help pay for uninsured adults, and in these trying economic times we need to take advantage of the federal dollars to help more people and offer better coverage.
- The monthly state cost for adultBasic is currently \$290 per enrollee and the coverage does not include prescription drug or behavioral health benefits.
- The expanded adultBasic would cost the state between \$116 and \$138 per enrollee, per month, depending on the enrollee's family income. The federal government will pay more than 50 percent of the costs and the coverage will include prescription and behavioral health benefits for both the current and new enrollees.
- This expansion is intended to be a bridge to federal universal health care program and will have a four-year sunset unless a program is passed sooner than that.
- Expanded adultBasic can start on July 1, 2009, if there is timely passage of state legislation and federal approval.
- People who recently lost their jobs will be helped if the U.S. House stimulus plan becomes law. But hardworking Pennsylvanians who have jobs but no health care benefits would not be helped by the stimulus plan. The majority of the uninsured has jobs, but don't have insurance. The Governor's plan would help those people.