

Seeking a **DENTAL ASSISTANT**

Excellent Hours,
Salary & Benefits
Click to apply...



Get Yellow Advantage

LUBBOCK
O N L I N E

Web Search powered by YAHOO! SEARCH

PLACE AN AD

SUBSCRIBE TO THE PAPER



MOSTLY CLOUDY 94° F

Get more
Lubbock weather

NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT FEATURES OPINION SPOTTED BLOGS OBITUARIES JOBS CARS HOMES RENTALS CLASSIFIEDS SERVICES

Home Local News

PRINT E-MAIL A A

Local News

Lawmakers push to hear bill giving Medicaid to uninsured kids

By Enrique Rangel | A-J AUSTIN BUREAU
Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Story last updated at 5/12/2009 - 2:01 am

AUSTIN - With the session winding down, on Monday a group of lawmakers urged a House committee to send to the chamber's floor a bill that would provide Medicaid coverage to 258,000 uninsured children in Texas.

"What we are urging members of the Calendars Committee is to put it on the state calendar so that we can get this bill passed as soon as possible," Rep. Elliott Naishtat, D-Austin, said in reference to House Bill 1541.

The bill, authored by Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, has been sitting in Calendars for weeks, Naishtat and others charged. The 13-member panel has the final say on what bills go to the House floor for consideration.

"The bottom line is if this bill were to be passed and signed by the governor, approximately 250,000 more kids would have access to insurance," Turner said. In the 2007 session, Turner convinced his colleagues in the Legislature to pass a bill that has added more than 200,000 children to the state and federally funded Children's Health Insurance Program.

For Turner and other lawmakers, mainly Democrats, HB 1541 has become a priority this session because the number of children with no health insurance keeps growing.

According to state and federal figures, one of every four youngster younger than 19 in the state has no medical insurance and with 1.5 million uninsured kids, Texas leads the nation.

HB 1541 would extend the Medicaid coverage from the current six months to a year and the largest chunk of the funding would come from the federal government, Turner said.

"If we don't use this federal money we lose it to other states," he said.

In the past decade, Texas has forfeited more than \$1 billion in federal funds because the state didn't fund or inadequately funded some programs for its indigent population, Turner and others said.

Rep. Brian McCall, R-Plano, chairman of the Calendars Committee, was on the House floor for most of Monday and could not be reached for comment but Rep. Eddie Lucio III, the panel's vice chair, said that although the bill has not been voted on he hopes that it would happen soon.

"The chairman maintains the last discretion decision whether or not to send a bill," Lucio said. "But if it was up to me it'd be out of Calendars already and we already would have had a debate on (the House floor)."

For thousands of West Texas families and others, HB 1541 is just as important because the number of uninsured youngsters keeps going up just like in the rest of the state.

In Potter County, for example, one in five children have no health insurance, according to county-by-county figures compiled by Karl Eschbach, the State Demographer of Texas. Even in Randall County, the seventh wealthiest county in Texas, 15.7 percent of its youngsters don't have health insurance.

The number is just as high in the South Plains. In Lubbock County, it is 22 percent and in neighboring counties like Crosby and Hale the percentage is slightly higher at 22.9 percent and 23.1 percent respectively.

Turner's bill, however, has some detractors.

"The Texas Legislature should resist calls to expand the Medicaid Program by extending



Jobs

CAREER OPPORTUNITY I

Am Looking For A Particular Type Of Person. One Who Will Take Personal Interest...

NTS COMMUNICATIONS Bill

Verification Specialist Verify invoices,verify rates,file disputes Work...

NURSES UNLIMITED, INC

Is Seeking Enthusiastic SELF-MOTIVATED LVN To Do Home Visits And...

HEALTHCARE STAFF NEEDED

Giles W. Dalby Correctional Facility Post, TX FT - various shifts/days...

Physical and Occupational

Therapist Midland Memorial Hospital is currently recruiting Physical...

SEE ALL TOPJOBS

Autos

Real Estate

MORE LUBBOCK CLASSIFIEDS

Search for jobs with

YAHOO! hotjobs

Featured Real Estate Agent

[Charles Nell](#) Coldwell Banker Rick Canup, REALTORS
(806) 793-0677



the continuous eligibility period from six months to 12 months because it would cost Texas taxpayers almost \$300 million over the next two year, the conservative think-tank Texas Public Policy Foundation said in a statement.

"Given recent forecasts of a sizeable budget shortfall next session, the state needs to tighten its belt now and preserve as much as cash as it can," said Andrea Whitman, health care policy analyst at the Foundation.

To comment on this story:

enrique.rangel@morris.com | (512) 673-7553

walt.nett@lubbockonline.com | 766-8706

Reader Comments

Posted by: [jeffross](#) at May. 12, 2009 at 10:02:27 am -2 Rating

I'm going to table my "typical liberal reactions" for now, and state a purely fiscal question.

I wonder if anyone has any real data comparing the costs of processing eligibility documentation twice a year instead of once a year, compared to savings realized by dropping those who do not meet eligibility requirements for the 6 month span in question?

Posted by: [jeffross](#) at May. 12, 2009 at 4:19:14 pm

Interesting. Just asking for a cost comparison rates negative points. Does the question somehow violate your morals or something? Is it the topic, the bill, or the comment writer that you don't like?

You can comment by logging in.

Sponsored Links

[medicaid coverage](#)
www.Seniors-Health-Insurance.com

[Gi Bill](#)
www.Military.com/gibill

Ads by Yahoo!



CONTACT US 806-762-8844

[Webmaster](#)

Your Name

[Need More Help?](#)

This site, and all its content © 2009 The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal | The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Email Addresses](#) | [Need Help with LubbockOnline](#)
[Advertise with Us](#) | [Local Business Listings](#)