

MHA publicly responds to governor's proposed budget

Also, MHA issues message to members on state budget

The Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) Tuesday publicly expressed support for several elements of Gov. Mark Dayton's newly proposed state budget while voicing several concerns, especially about a recommendation to eliminate health coverage for thousands of residents.

The proposed budget called for limiting eligibility for MinnesotaCare, a state-subsidized health insurance program for lower-income working Minnesotans, to those who earn less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline. If implemented, the state's uninsured population would increase by approximately 7,150 people.

The association also questioned the surprisingly large increases to hospital and other provider surcharges that would be imposed on top of significant cuts in the Health and Human Services budget, said MHA President and Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Massa.

"Nobody expected that solving this budget shortfall would be easy or pain-free," he said in a statement. "But we are concerned that there is a disproportionate reliance on Health and Human Services cuts to balance the state's budget while other spending areas remain virtually unscathed."

Massa also pointed to the history of comparatively larger cuts to Health and Human Services over the past several years to emphasize the significance of the proposed budget's impact to the state's health care system.

Massa did commend Dayton for producing a thoughtful budget worthy of serious consideration, and he said the association supports the governor's recognition of the need for new revenues to solve a portion of the state's projected \$6.2 billion budget shortfall.

"Now, Minnesota needs to roll up our collective sleeves and make sure that the end product passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor is balanced, proportional and sustainable," Massa said.

The governor is also proposing deep cuts in government support to educate future physicians and health care workers, he pointed out.

"The impact of these cuts will affect all of our state's communities just at a time when we should be building up our health care work force to care for our rapidly aging population," Massa added.

MHA issues e-mail to members on state budget

In an e-mail today to member CEOs, chief financial officers, government relations officers and communicators, Massa discussed some hospital-related highlights of the proposed budget. Find his complete message here: [\[PDF\]](#)

The Legislature is expected to release its own budget proposal soon. [^top](#)