

Federal government must step up or MinnesotaCare will go

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Minnesota is moving forward on reforming our health care system, but the federal government needs to do its part - and soon, according to the Minnesota Budget Project. "Hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans will get access to affordable health insurance under proposals in the Legislature, including two bills being introduced that would preserve MinnesotaCare," said Minnesota Budget Project Deputy Director Christina Wessel. "The federal government needs to provide specific guidance on some of these issues so the state can move ahead."

The bills being introduced in the Minnesota House and Senate would use a federal Basic Health Plan, an option included in the Affordable Care Act, to fund the next generation of MinnesotaCare. House File 214 and Senate File 184 would make up to 190,000 low-income working Minnesotans eligible for affordable health insurance, including family farmers and others who are employed but unable to get insurance. However, Minnesota policymakers are still waiting for the federal government to issue guidance on how states can implement a Basic Health Plan. Without information from Washington, Minnesota cannot move forward with a Basic Health Plan, and tens of thousands of Minnesotans could lose access to affordable health insurance.

"There is so much at stake in Minnesota. We can continue to be a national leader in health care innovation by preserving MinnesotaCare, through which hundreds of thousands of low-income working individuals get affordable health insurance," said Wessel. "By using the Basic Health Plan option, we can keep MinnesotaCare and make it even better. And Minnesota can use hundreds of millions in federal dollars to accomplish those goals."

Wessel said the Legislature and Governor Dayton deserve thanks for their leadership in advancing proposals that bring hundreds of millions in federal dollars to fund health care for Minnesotans.