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# Anti-Hunger Advocate

brought to you by the Anti-Hunger Action Committee

January 2009

## Urgent protest set for Jan. 27

*Will the legislature cut someone you know off Medicaid?*

It's time to act. It's life or death.

The legislative session begins on January 26, and Medicaid cuts of 15% are predicted. In September, recipients lost the following benefits: eyeglasses, hearing aids, podiatry, chiropractics, and physical therapy. What is left to cut?

*Dental services are in danger.* If that happens, infections in the mouth could be left untreated, and then spread to the heart.

*Eligibility is in danger.* Right now, Medicaid covers low-income aged/disabled/blind people up to 100% of the federal poverty level. With cuts, that number could be reduced to people who make 75% of the federal poverty level or under. (See box inset for the federal poverty level statistic.)

*The spend-down program is in danger.* Currently, people can "spend down" their monthly income until it reaches the Medicaid income level requirement. This way they can spend their way into Medicaid services and benefits. Elimination of the Medically

Needy/Spend-down program would mean loss of healthcare for many children, adults, and elderly adults.

*General Assistance is in danger.* General Assistance is available to adults without dependent children who have medical/mental health limitations that keep them from working

for longer than 30 days. GA is temporary help when people have not yet been found eligible for federal disability benefits. If GA is cut, these adults will have nowhere else to turn.

*WE HAVE TO HELP.* Members of the Anti-Hunger Action Committee, the Disabled Right Action Committee, and the community at large are staging a protest on January 27. We'll meet at 1:30 p.m. in the Capitol cafeteria, then begin the

demonstration in the rotunda at 2. You are invited to join us, and please bring a friend! With enough people protesting, we can stop legislators from endangering the lives of thousands of Utahns.

*For an interview with a Medicaid recipient who may get cut, see page 4.*

**SCARY STAT:** If Medicaid eligibility were reduced to 75% of the federal poverty level, the result could be catastrophic: Any single person with disabilities who earns more than \$650 a month would be cut off Medicaid.

## Tuesday, January 27, 2009

### protest on Capitol Hill

meet in cafeteria at 1:30 - protest in rotunda at 2

We'll be wearing costumes and carrying props. Come and bring a friend!

Questions? Call Sarah at (801) 364-7765, ext. 130, or e-mail [sarah@crossroads-u-c.org](mailto:sarah@crossroads-u-c.org)



# Annual party spreads cheer



**AND THE WINNER IS...:** Director of AHAC Bill Tibbitts presents board member Faina Raik with a certificate of appreciation for her dedicated service to the group. Faina did not realize she'd receive this special award!

by Sarah Martindell, social justice advocate at Crossroads

If you weren't here on December 16, you missed out on a great party!

AHAC held its annual holiday party, with food, singing, and socializing. We drew a crowd of some 30 people.

The party was a great way to celebrate a year of hard work on low-income advocacy. At the same time, it served as a chance to meet new people and invite them to participate in AHAC events.

The highlight of the night was the group's performance of a music video for youtube. We first thanked Governor Huntsman for trying to prevent the Medicaid budget from being cut. We then sang "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth" as a reference to the dental benefits that would be preserved under the governor's plan.

The song was incomplete without special props made by AHAC board

member David Hughes. (See photo on page 3.) He fashioned pairs of teeth out of various materials, including Styrofoam and hardened sponges. Some of the teeth were yellow, some were white, and some even had a gold filling.

David himself carried a buck-toothed mask he'd made. The mask had a movable mouth, guided by a hidden coat hanger. All of this creativity contributed to an awesome video message for the governor.

You can view the "Two Front Teeth" video at this address:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJR\\_YehaI60](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJR_YehaI60)

Thank you to everyone who attended the party, provided food, participated in the music videos, or volunteered in any other way. We'll see you for the holiday party next year!



**THE ANGELS SING:** Rudy Roca, AHAC board member, belts out a solo for the partygoers. Rudy also opened the Governor Huntsman thank-you video with a heartfelt address to the governor. See story above for a link to the video.



**THE BELLS RING:** Accompanying the Christmas carols were Dennis Keating (AHAC board member) on guitar, and Sarah Martindell (social justice advocate) on piano.

# AHAC arts & music highlights



ABOVE: AHAC partygoers sing "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth" for a youtube video. Each person holds a buck-tooth prop made by David Hughes. (David holds the mask.) The teeth video can be found at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJR\\_Yehal60](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJR_Yehal60) See story on page 2.

BELOW: David's props are displayed in all their glory.



## More music

Besides the teeth video (depicted at left), AHAC also starred in a spontaneous second video, singing an original song to the tune of "Jingle Bells":

*Medicaid, Medicaid, we need glasses now  
oh how hard it is to see when glasses aren't  
allowed*

*Medicaid, Medicaid, hearing aids we need  
We can't bear a traffic noise—it's  
dangerous indeed!*

*A couple months ago  
The funds were surely cut  
They slashed our benefits  
And now we're in a rut!*

*We're worried 'bout what's next  
The session of '09  
It can't be that complex, you see  
Our lives are on the line!*

You can view the video—which is not as professional as the first—at this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeQVHFR1VCg>

**What other props have we come up with for our Jan. 27 protest? Show up at 1:30 in the Capitol cafeteria and find out! Be ready to wear a costume and carry a prop!**

# Healthcare action step

*Ask Senator Waddoups to protect Medicaid recipients from disastrous budget cuts*

Ask Utah's new Senate President, Senator Michael Waddoups, to protect Medicaid from budget cuts this session.

During the special session in September, many benefits were cut from the Medicaid budget, including eyeglasses, hearing aids, podiatry, and physical therapy.

More cuts could eliminate dental benefits, and *all Medicaid coverage* for a single person with disabilities making over \$650 a month!

*Don't let that happen!* Contact Senator Waddoups and urge him to use his new position of leadership for good. Tell him he must protect the health of low-income people.

[mwaddoups@utahsenate.org](mailto:mwaddoups@utahsenate.org)

2868 Matterhorn Dr  
Taylorsville, UT 84084

Call Waddoups at 967-0225 anytime, or call 538-1035 on Jan. 27 (the day of our rally).

## People you know may lose healthcare



**AN ACTIVE ADVOCATE:** AHAC board co-chair Lou Anne Stevenson models her "Basic healthcare is not a luxury" T-shirt. The slogan embodies her emotions as she faces healthcare loss with the potential Medicaid budget cuts.

Lou Anne Stevenson is one of thousands of Utahns who would suffer as a result of Medicaid cuts. (See front page article.)

Lou Anne is very honest about the effect this would have on her wellbeing: "It concerns and kinda scares me. Even though it's not a personal matter to those [legislators] who cut [the budget], it's personal to me. Without managing my health problems, I can't stay alive, live to my potential, and be the person I'm meant to be."

Lou Anne argues, "The people on [Capitol] Hill don't realize when they make their decisions that they're affecting a real life here—a real human being, and the whole quality of their life. And they're taking away

the rights in their life—maybe even taking *away* their life, period!"

In reference to having a disability and needing governmental help, Lou Anne says, "I didn't ask to get in the position I'm in. And I didn't put myself there. I hate being a beggar; I'd rather be the giver. But I've just learned to live with life the best I can, and adjust."

Lou Anne is taking her fear and compassion and turning them into action. She will be at the AHAC protest on January 27 (see article on page 1), ready to demand that legislators listen to the needs of low-income people.

Lou Anne's closing words are emphatic: "I will stand up for my right to life and health!"

**YOU**  
better come to the  
next AHAC meeting!

Tuesday, January 20  
5:00 p.m.  
Crossroads lobby  
347 S 400 E

