

***Support amendment # 792 to continue fee waiver protection
for MassHealth applicants***

Sponsored by Sen. Marzilli, McGee, & Jehlen

Since 2006 federal rules have required US citizens applying for Medicaid to supply documentary proof of citizenship and identity such as a birth certificate. In many states, US citizens unable to afford to obtain documents lost coverage. In Massachusetts, thanks to a birth certificate fee waiver and the efforts of the Office of Medicaid, such losses of coverage have been minimal. Language authorizing the fee waiver was included in the fiscal year 2007 budget and the 2008 budget and is included in the House fiscal year 2009 budget bill. (Line item 4518-0200). However, it is NOT included in the Senate Ways & Means Budget.

This amendment would maintain a fee waiver for citizens seeking a copy of their birth certificate from the state vital records office in order to establish eligibility for MassHealth. The Senate Ways and Means Committee attributes no savings to the elimination of the fee waiver language from the vital records account and the amendment will continue existing practices.

The Office of Medicaid is verifying birth certificates directly with the vital records office and identity with the Registry of Motor Vehicles and other agencies. However, the fee waiver is still needed. Many people born in the state who do not have a record with RMV still need a paper copy of their birth certificate in order to obtain an ID. The cost of obtaining a birth certificate is \$18 (in person) -\$28 (by mail).

Continuing the fee waiver is most likely to help Massachusetts-born citizens applying for benefits for the first time and who because of age or disability do not already have a government-issued photo ID or other proof of identity such as:

- Children over age 16 (who can no longer use a parent's affidavit to prove identity)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Homeless individuals

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