

# Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania

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## **Safety-Net Hospitals Join Call for 100% Restoration of Medical Assistance Funding**

(Harrisburg) The Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania (SNAP) joins other hospital groups in calling on the state legislature and Governor Rendell to restore fully all Medical Assistance hospital payment funding to the state's FY 2010 budget.

The current budget proposals – which call for as much as \$280 million in cuts in supplemental Medical Assistance payments to hospitals – would have a devastating impact on the state's rural and urban safety-net hospitals and the communities they serve, according to SNAP president Michael Chirieleison. Significant numbers of programs, services, and jobs could become casualties of these proposals.

“Safety-net hospitals care for the majority of the state's Medical Assistance population and its low-income and uninsured residents,” Chirieleison said. “Under the various budget proposals, the safety-net hospitals that serve these disadvantaged groups would suffer at least 85 percent of the spending cuts. At a time when Medical Assistance enrollment is up and the number of uninsured Pennsylvanians continues to rise, it is both counter-productive and very dangerous to target for such major cuts the very hospitals that do the most to serve these people.”

Among the payments that would be cut under these budget proposals are supplemental payments to hospitals that provide inpatient and outpatient care to especially large numbers of Medical Assistance patients; payments to rural and urban hospitals that care for especially large numbers of low-income patients; payments to hospitals with maternity and neonatal intensive care units that care for especially large numbers of Medical Assistance and uninsured patients; hospital burn units; and hospital trauma centers. Under SB 850, many of these payments would be eliminated entirely.

SNAP joins with other hospital groups in urging the General Assembly and Governor Rendell to develop and enact a budget that will preserve a vital core function of government – that of delivering health care to people in need – at a time when that need is greater than it has been for more than a generation.

The Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania represents the interests of private, acute-care hospitals that play the leading role in caring for poor, disadvantaged, and the uninsured Pennsylvanians. Safety-net hospitals are the 25 percent of hospitals in the state that care for the highest combined proportion of uninsured patients, Medical Assistance recipients, and Medicare SSI recipients and that therefore constitute the state's health care safety net. These hospitals are located throughout the state – in the east, west, and central portions of Pennsylvania, in urban, suburban, and rural areas, and in 19 of the state's 67 counties. As a result of the patients they serve, safety-net hospitals face a significant, continuing, disproportionate challenge to their financial health.

Additional information about the Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania can be found on the group's web site at [www.pasafetynet.org](http://www.pasafetynet.org).

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