



DHSS Follow Up Statement from DHSS Commissioner Bill Streur

Nov. 15, 2013

On Nov. 15, 2013, Governor Parnell announced his decision to not seek expansion of Alaska's Medicaid program in the FY 2015 budget. His concerns focused on the current and future impacts expansion would have on Alaskans. He mentioned the safety net in Alaska and how it affects those Alaskans who fall under 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and otherwise do not qualify for the Medicaid Program. Beginning in 2014, Alaskans that earn 100 percent of the FPL or above qualify through the Federally Facilitated Marketplace for subsidized insurance coverage.

Recently, the Governor has been meeting with health care providers, large and small business organizations, and other stakeholders from across Alaska discussing recommendations for Alaskans who fall under 100 percent of the FPL and are the main users of Alaska's safety net services.

It is imperative that we know more about the people who make up this category — who they are, their health care needs, and whether the current services available to them are being utilized or if different services need to be created. The state remains committed to funding the safety net of health care services and to improving the delivery of those services in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

The Department of Health and Social Services is in the process of developing an improved communications plan in the Division of Public Assistance directly targeted at those Alaskans who are the most vulnerable and who are in need of accessing the programs and services offered by the state and federal governments. In the months ahead, DHSS will execute the communications plan, and will strive to better identify and inform income-eligible Alaskans about the services available to them at little or no cost.