

Sponsor Statement for HB 367

Medical Assistance Program Coverage

An Act relating to coverage of children and pregnant women under the medical assistance program; and providing for an effective date.

Released: January 29, 2002

Contact: Representative John Coghill's office at (907) 465-3719

The federal government has slowly been imposing guidelines to provide more and more public assistance to more and more people, many of whom are not living in poverty. Working Alaskans are now not only being asked to provide medical care for the poor, they are being asked to provide medical care for Alaskans living at 250% of the poverty level.

[House Bill 367](#) serves two purposes.

1. First, it brings the definition of poverty back to the basic assumption that a family is poor if they do not have the resources to provide for essential needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Persons 150% of the poverty level would qualify for medical coverage for children and pregnant women.
2. Second, it tells the federal government that we disapprove of its move to provide public assistance to people who are not poor at the expense of people who are truly living at poverty level.

This legislation does not eliminate [Denali Kid Care](#). It eliminates free medical services for a family of four who, with their PFD's is making over \$50,000 a year. Why in a state where unemployment is 5.8% are we providing medical assistance to 105,000 Alaskans. The simple truth is that we are broadening the definition of poor. This legislation frees up \$27 million in federal and state Medicaid dollars that can be used to provide medical services to the Alaskans who are poor and to the developmentally disabled.