

**MASSACHUSETTS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
WEST END PLACE**

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To: Members of the Massachusetts Senate
Re: **Budget Amendment #715**
Da: May 20, 2004

Dear Senator:

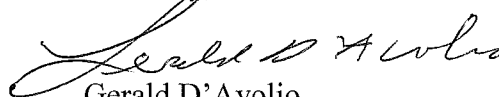
The Massachusetts Catholic Conference **supports Amendment #715** that would continue Mass. Health for 3000 elderly and disabled legal immigrants.

Immigrants come to this country for opportunity and they contribute to our economy and society. As a matter of justice, a state whose economy has depended so much on immigrant labor should assist these individuals and their families in efforts to assimilate into their new homeland. The need for safe and affordable health care is not lessened because a person is a legal immigrant. Without such care, more expensive emergency medical care will undoubtedly be needed. Policy that prevents immigrants from obtaining basic and preventive health care means that many immigrants will develop health complications that could have been prevented.

As workers at Catholic Charities Community service sites throughout Eastern Massachusetts can tell you, these health complications are all too real. An immigrant woman came to the Legal Services Clinic of Catholic Charities with the letter she received telling her that she would no longer be receiving health coverage. As an immigrant from Haiti, she was excited to come to the United States and anxious to begin working but a difficult pregnancy caused a delay in her job search. At nine months, she delivered her baby stillborn and a series of internal complications followed. All that the legal services attorney could offer her is access to free care. She will no longer be able to see the physician she has come to trust and she cannot afford expensive medication.

I respectfully suggest that you **support** this important effort to assist the 3000 elderly and disabled, legal immigrants.

Sincerely,


Gerald D'Avolio
Executive Director