

Financial Nightmare

Medicaid Program Is An Expensive Pill To Swallow

RALEIGH--North Carolina's present financial crisis regarding its Medicaid program is nothing new. Since its very beginning on January 1, 1976, the state's attempt to provide quality health care for its low income citizens under the Medicaid program has been a financial nightmare.

Prior to the enactment of Medicaid, states, including North Carolina, had some type medical assistance program for the poor with federal matching funds being used. In most cases, these were very limited programs providing only minimum health services to public assistance recipients. Some of the states, including North Carolina, also provided these services for certain persons who were only "medically needy" and did not need a monthly public assistance check.

In 1965, Congress apparently was deeply concerned about the amount and quality of health services being provided for the nation's poor. Therefore, it adopted Title XIX of the Social Security Act which is also known as the Medicaid program. States were given until January 1, 1970 to imple-

ment the program, those failing to do so by that date would lose all federal matching for medical assistance.

The 1969 Session of the N.C. General Assembly adopted one of the most comprehensive Medicaid programs in the country. It included all the optional, as well as, the mandatory services. It also provided these services to the "medically needy" which was optional, and public assistance recipients. Payments for these services are made directly to doctors, nursing homes, hospitals, dentists, drug stores and others who provide the services.

The state was faced with its first financial crisis the first month of the program. Nursing homes across the state were dissatisfied with the method of payment even though they were to begin receiving possibly twice as much per patient as they had previously been receiving. They objected to an audit and to being paid for services after they were delivered as required by the federal government. They threatened to evict all welfare recipients. The state advanced the nursing homes \$1.3 million interest free until

their first regular payments began to be paid.

As soon as the dust from the nursing home crisis began to settle, another windstorm began to blow for the infant Medicaid program. Counties who were required by state law to match the state's non-federal share of the program (at that time federal 73.96 percent, state 13.02 percent and counties 13.02 percent) began to find that they had not budgeted enough money for this comprehensive health care program. Several counties had insufficient funds to cover their share of the payments during the first six months. Payments to providers in those counties had to be held up until the counties finally were able to pay their share. If these problems did not create enough anxiety in trying to provide health services for the poor, the fact that several counties in adopting their 1970-71 budgets deliberately cut the amount requested for the Medicaid program added to the strain.

Counties during the first few years complained so much about the rising costs of the program, the General Assembly reduced their share to only 15 percent of the non-federal

share and the state began paying 85 percent. Currently, the federal government pays 68.03 percent, state 27.17 percent and counties only 4.8 percent.

Many other financial problems have occurred during the relatively few years the program has been in existence.

Very few if any of the legislators who adopted the program in 1969, could have visualized a total expenditure of \$218.9 million for fiscal year 1975-76 or an estimated expenditure of \$240.7 million for the current 1976-77 fiscal year. Nationally, the program grew from a cost of less than \$2 billion in 1966 to \$14 billion in 1976.

The limited medical assistance program that the state was providing the year prior to the beginning of Medicaid cost only approximately \$30 million. Estimated expenditures for 1976-77 represent an 800 percent increase over that amount.

Since the program began, several cost-cutting measures have been adopted and some are still in existence. Payments for professional services were reduced to 90 percent of usual and customary.

Co-payments were introduced where recipients are required to pay a small amount for some services and Medicaid pays the remainder. Several limits were placed on services but one of these did not prove too wise. At one time, the program would pay to have all the teeth pulled, but would not pay for dentures to replace them. This limitation was soon rescinded.

North Carolina was one of the leaders in the area of "peer review". The N.C. Peer Review Foundation under contract reviews each hospital, nursing home and Intermediate Care Facility admission to determine if the amount of care and type of care is adequate and necessary for each recipient.

Despite the cost-cutting efforts expenditures have continued to escalate. A part of the increase is due to rising costs of health care. These costs are up 25.3 percent nationally over the past two years, compared with a consumer price index increase of only about 16.4 percent.

The state's latest and boldest move to curtail Medicaid costs was in 1975 when it contracted with Health Application Systems, a private company, to administer the program for a 26-month period at a cost of \$405 million. The contract supposedly put a ceiling on the costs to the state until July 1, 1977.

Check the ads in the Charlotte Post each week for the best bargains in town.



MRS. SARAH POLK
Bake-Off Advisor

Ms. Polk To Attend Pillsbury Contest

By Sidney Moore Jr., Post Staff Writer

Pillsbury "Bake-Off" Advisor Sarah Polk of 2826 Botany Street will depart for the Boston, Mass. contest site Saturday, August 28.

Mrs. Polk, a winner in the 1975 "Bake-Off", is an advisor this year. She will be accompanied on her trip by her friend Mrs. Almeda Rippey.

They will arrive in Boston in time for a clambake party and tour of outstanding New England Aquarium at historic Central Wharf, according to the official "Bake-Off" schedule.

Other preliminary activities are scheduled for Sunday. Following an orientation brunch and church for those who choose to go, guests of the "Bake-Off" will tour the historic city. The tour ends at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, where a dinner party will be held.

Monday's activities start with breakfast followed immediately by the actual contest, said the schedule. Winners will be announced Tuesday, August 31, on a nationally televised awards program. The program will be carried on WBTB in Charlotte at 11 a.m.

Mrs. Polk has been chosen advisor for "an outstanding job promoting the Bake-Off in Charlotte-area stores, extension clubs, churches, newspapers and as a guest on a local television talk show," said a Pillsbury spokesman.

Company officials also noted that Mrs. Polk has been chosen as a teacher by a local daily newspaper for a course entitled, "Southern Cooking of the Carolinas."

Myopia Or Nearsightedness?

By Dr. Raleigh W. Bynum, Optometrist

Myopia, or as it is more commonly called nearsightedness, is a visual result of man's trend in daily activity. The myopic individual is usually very efficient with close work and, due to blurred vision, very inefficient with distant tasks. This set of conditions correlates very highly with man's increase in close work tasks.

To remove a general misconception, the myope does NOT have "weak" eyes. The myopic eye is strong to a fault. Since distance seeing is dependent on total relaxation of the focusing system, and since the myopic eye is over powered to allow for constant close work, that relaxation of the eye for good distance seeing is impossible. The glasses are given in order to neutralize the eye's excess power.

Nearsightedness is usually found in a binocular (both eyes) form. As with any other visual condition, it has different classifications with the more prevalent being the progressive or malignant type. The term malignant myopia has no connection with cancer, but simply indicates a type of error that starts at age 7 or 8, and gets progressively worse

to age 25 or 28. This type usually has some hereditary influence and is characterized by a lengthening of the eye. Correction is given in the form of spectacle lenses or contact lenses.

The second classification is termed functional or school myopia. This type can begin at any age and is not necessarily involved with hereditary influences. The functional myope is a victim of his environment and has made an appropriate adjustment in his visual system. With an increase in close work activity, the visual system also increases in close work activity, the visual system also increases in close work efficiency. If this arrangement persists for a period of time the system will become very efficient at near with total disregard for the far point or distant vision. This condition is highly responsive to treatment in its early stages with possible total elimination of the myopia. This treatment consists of temporary reading lenses combined with office or home visual training. The success of this approach is directly related to how early the nearsightedness is detected.

Myopia is no longer a fate which must be accepted without protest.

Count them up! More Values in Every Aisle Add Up to More Savings at A&P!

ADVERTISED ITEM POLICY: Each of these advertised items is required to be readily available for sale at or below the advertised price in each A&P Store, except as specifically noted in this ad.

USDA INSPECTED FRESH WHOLE **FRYERS 39¢** (2 in a bag, limit 2 bags, cut up fryers lb 43¢)

USDA INSPECTED FRESH **BOX-O-CHICKEN 39¢** (tender cured hickory smoked picnics sliced 79¢ whole 69¢)

MARKET STYLE **SLICED BACON 1!8**

HEAVY WESTERN GRAIN-FED BEEF **ROAST 1!38** (boneless round)

OSCAR MAYER VARIETY PACK **LUNCHEON MEAT 1!38** (12 oz pkg)

HYGRADE'S MEAT OR BEEF **BALL PARK FRANKS 1!19** (1-lb pkg)

HEAVY WESTERN GRAIN-FED BEEF **CHUCK STEAK 78¢** (bone in lb)

3 LBS. OR MORE - FRESHLY **GROUND CHUCK 98¢** (lb)

HEAVY WESTERN GRAIN-FED BEEF **STEAKS 98¢** (swiss bone in lb)

CUBED CHUCK 1!59

CORN-FED FRESH PORK **SPARE RIBS 1!39** (meaty country style, lb)

HEAVY WESTERN GRAIN-FED BEEF **GROUND BEEF 69¢** (A&P pure, lb)

HEAVY WESTERN GRAIN-FED BEEF **BONELESS CHUCK ROAST 88¢** (5-lb chub pack or bone in shoulder roast, lb)

CORN-FED FRESH **PORK CHOPS 1!29** (1/4 loin sliced or combo pack, lb)

BOOTH'S FROZEN **FISHBURGER 79¢** (12 oz pkg)

BOOTH'S FROZEN **SHRIMPBURGER 99¢** (12 oz pkg)

FISHER BOY FROZEN **FISH STICKS 99¢** (3-pkg)

ITEMS OFFERED FOR SALE NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHER RETAIL DEALERS OR WHOLESALERS.

JANE PARKER **CHERRY PIES 69¢** (22 oz pkg)

FRESH ITALIAN **PURPLE PRUNES 3 1!00** (3-pkg)

SICILIA **LEMON JUICERS 49¢** (4-oz each)

IN 3 1/2" DECORATIVE PLANTER **"TALK TO" PLANTS 1!69** (each)

SHASTA **COLA 59¢** (12 oz can)

KRAFT IMITATION **MAYONNAISE 76¢** (8-oz jar)

JANE PARKER CRACKED WHEAT OR 100% **WHEAT BREAD 39¢** (16 oz loaf)

JANE PARKER - BAKE N SERVE **TWIN ROLLS 3 1!00** (12 oz 12 oz pkgs)

JANE PARKER CHEESE **CORN PUFFS 49¢** (7 oz bag)

ANN PAGE GRAPE JAM OR **GRAPE JELLY 1!19** (3-lb jar)

ANN PAGE CREAMY OR KRUNCHY **PEANUT BUTTER 99¢** (28 oz jar)

MINUTE MAID FROZEN CONCENTRATED **ORANGE JUICE 59¢** (12 oz can)

OR-IDA GOLDEN CRINKLE CUT **FROZEN POTATOES 1!19** (5 lb bag)

MRS. SMITH'S **FROZEN APPLE PIES 79¢** (26 oz pkg)

PICKLES 79¢

CHEESE 3!99

FOOD SLICES 3!99

MINUTE MAID **CINNAMON ROLLS 49¢** (12 oz jar)

ELSIE **ICE CREAM 99¢** (10 oz jar)

VALUABLE COUPON: You have been selected to receive The Charlotte Post two full months free of charge-- A \$1.50 value with your order to continue for 10 additional months at only \$6.50. A years subscription to The Charlotte Post for only \$6.50. Fill in the order blank below and mail it with your \$6.50, or if you would like we will bill you later. --Mail Today--

Offer good to new subscribers only. If you can't use this give it to a friend.

Order Blank

Yes, Please mail The Charlotte Post to me. I understand I will only pay for 10 months but I will get The Post for 1 year.

Enclosed is \$6.50 Please Bill Me

Name.....
Address.....
City & State..... Zip.....
Phone Number.....

R.D. Hovey
Circulation Director

More than 44,500 Charlotteans Read The Charlotte Post The Voice of The Charlotte Black Community

Better Cleaning Maintenance Supply, Inc.

DISTRIBUTOR OF Johnson Wax Products Advance Floor Maintenance Equip

Daily Deliveries

424 N. College St. 372-9888

GREENDELL'S FROZEN

BEEF PATTIES 1!29

WAFER STEAKS 1!49

MINUTE BEEF STEAKS 2!29

SAVE 1!58 WITH COUPONS IN THIS AD

CLOROX LIQUID BLEACH

WITH THIS COUPON GALLON JUG 48¢

A&P DUNCAN HINES CAKE MIXES

SAVE 18c

YELLOW LEMON SUPREME BUTTER RECIPE 2 1!00

A&P GREER HALVES FREESTONE PEACHES

SAVE 32c

WITH THIS COUPON 3 29 OZ CANS 1!00

A&P PURE VEGETABLE WESSON OIL

SAVE 31c

WITH THIS COUPON 24 OZ BOTTLE 68¢

A&P EIGHT O'CLOCK INSTANT COFFEE

SAVE 30c

WITH THIS COUPON 10 OZ JAR 2!49

MAXWELL HOUSE **COFFEE 1!19**

SAVE 20c

REG - 1.39

GOOD THRU SAT. AUG 28 AT A&P (A29)

LIMIT ONE COUPON