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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Mark B. Cohen, Chair 
Democratic Human Services Committee

DATE: January 31, 2011

RE: Co-sponsorship of Legislation on Inmate Medical Assistance

Your co-sponsorship is requested of legislation that would provide a released inmate, who had medical assistance upon imprisonment, with immediate return to access to medical assistance upon release.

Most, but not all, county jail officials promptly allow released inmates who were receiving medical assistance to be returned to the medical assistance rolls. Inmates do not qualify for medical assistance while they are in jail. Yet, some jail officials terminate, rather than suspend, an inmate's medical assistance benefits. Thus, a released inmate has to reapply for medical assistance benefits. This could be harmful for someone with medical needs during the period while awaiting reinstatement.

This bill would require jail officials to either suspend, but not terminate, medical assistance benefits, and/ or create a system for inmates prior to release that allows reinstatement upon release, and/or allow an inmate to remain enrolled on medical assistance. A jail official would be disallowed from terminating the medical assistance benefits of an inmate.

This is the same as HB 2747 from last session. The cosponsors then were Brown, Caltagirone, Josephs, Siptroth, and Youngblood.

Please contact Linda Huntington at lhunting@pahouse.net or at 787-3085 in order to cosponsor this proposal.