



Decatur, Indiana

**Subscribe for
3 Months
Get Fourth
Month Free!**
[Click Here!](#)

**260.824.3500
800.756.2663**



Bluffton

**Click Here To
Our Web**

NEWS

- Home
- Local News
- Breaking News
- National News
- Business
- Entertainment
- Obituaries

SPORTS

- Local Sports
- National Sports
- Sports Calendar

CLASSIFIEDS

- Place An Ad
- Classifieds

MAKE US YOUR HOMEPAGE

DAILY DEMOCRAT

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Subscriptions
- Send Letter To Editor

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Community Events

February 2007						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

Social services advocates wary of Daniels' plan

Written by Administrator

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Advocates for more than 1 million Indiana residents who receive Medicaid and welfare welcomed Gov. Mitch Daniels' plan Wednesday to improve access management of benefits but remained wary until they can learn more details of the plan. The plan was expected today, when the state planned to release copies of its tentative contract to a team of vendors led by IBM Corp. to process applications for the benefits and lend technical support. The proposal aims to improve service to clients, reduce fraud and move people more quickly off welfare rolls and into jobs. "There isn't going to be a new system, but this can only be dramatically better than what's going on," Daniels said in an interview with The Associated Press before his announcement. But advocates question whether the state has had enough input on the plan, which still requires approval from federal officials who administer the Medicaid and the other benefits. A public hearing is set for Dec. 8 in Indianapolis. "I think it has to have more public input than just one public meeting with just a week's notice," said Patti O'Callaghan of the Indiana Coalition for Human Services, a group of nonprofits that serve needy and vulnerable Hoosiers. O'Callaghan and other advocates said they worry some residents could lose their benefits only temporarily, under the changes Daniels and the Family and Social Services Administration agreed to. But advocates invited to attend the governor's news conference agreed the current system is not working. "It requires multiple trips. It requires duplicate paperwork. It's extremely frustrating for one of the invitees, Melissa Durr, chief executive of the Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The plan has changed since it was originally conceived, in part due to concerns raised by advocates and recipients. Daniels agreed with a review team's recommendations to scale back the plan to outsource some of the FSSA functions and phase in the changes over 18 months beginning in spring. The rollout would begin in Grant County in north central Indiana, then move to southern Indiana and finally central Indiana. No new phase would begin before the current plan is complete. The revised plan calls for state employees to retain decision-making over eligibility determinations, Medicaid, welfare benefits, subsidized child care and non-Medicaid-related health insurance benefits for needy families. It also doubles the number of current FSSA employees who would be retained by the agency to about 700. The remaining 1,500 employees would be essentially guaranteed jobs with the consortium for two years at no less than equal pay as the current staff. Each of Indiana's 92 counties would retain an office where people could apply in person under the plan. The Internet, e-mail, facsimile transmissions and telephone call centers would provide greater access for benefit applicants and recipients. Daniels said his plan does not need legislative approval, but incoming Speaker Pat Bauer, D-South Bend, promised the Indiana House would hold public hearings. "We want to make sure that the interests of the people of Indiana are being protected in these efforts. We want to make sure that the care of thousands of Hoosiers is made a high

than the profit margins of a private company," Bauer said. Michael Reinke, executive director of the Indiana Coalition of Housing and Homeless Issues, said he hopes the plan integrates welfare initiatives with training that prepares Hoosiers for jobs that pay far more than the minimum wage. "We know 75 percent of the people who are unable to pay their bills are working," Reinke said. "If they're working and still unable to pay their bills, the system is broken." The public hearing scheduled for Decatur is held in the auditorium of Ivy Tech at 50 West Fall Creek Parkway, North Drive, in Indiana. **the Net: State reform plan: www.in.gov/gov/pdfs/112906-Eligibility-Report.pdf.**

[Indiana Molesters List](#)

How Many Live Near You Right Now? Free List of Indiana Sex Offenders

Ads by Goooooogle

[How to Adopt in Indiana](#)

Adoption help in Indiana. 24 hour service Call for free consultation

[Advertise on this](#)

**Copyright © 2007 Decatur Daily Democrat All rights reserved.
Powered by TriCube Media**