

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR**

ACTION REFERRAL

TO <i>Floyd</i>	DATE <i>5/27/08</i>
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER <i>000615</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>cc: Jacobs</i> <i>Gov. # 803265</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>6-5-08</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS <small>(Only when prepared for director's signature)</small>	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE <small>(Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)</small>	COMMENT
1. <i>Cleared 6/29/08, see attached letter</i>			
2.			
3.			
4.			



MAY 27 2008

Department of Health & Human Services
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

From: Governor Mark Sanford
To: rdkarma@aol.com
Date: Fri, May 23, 2008 8:56 AM
Subject: Your Correspondence

To: Ms. Jennifer Zielinski
rdkarma@aol.com

Jennifer,

Thank you for your e-mail. I am sorry to hear of the difficulties you have experienced regarding your application for Medicaid and am asking that someone from the Department of Health and Human Services contact you directly. You should be hearing from that office soon. In the meantime, thanks again for taking the time to write.

Mark

cc: The Honorable Emma Forkner, Director
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

463265

RECEIVED

MAY 13 2008

Referred to CS
Answered Casper

From: <rdkarma@aol.com>
To: <mark@gov.sc.gov>
Date: Tue, May 13, 2008 2:14 PM
Subject: Pregnant and need help

Contact the Office of the Governor

Name | Jennifer Zielinski
Company |
Address1 | 1913 McNeil Drive
Address2 |
City | Florence
State | SC
ZIP | 29501
County | Florence
Phone | 8434967847
Email | rdkarma@aol.com
IP | 10.92.2.5
Date | 5/13/2008 2:09:55 PM
Subject | Pregnant and need help

May 12, 2008

To: Governor Mark Sanford

From: Jennifer Zielinski
1913 Mc Neil Drive
Florence, SC 29501

I am writing this letter because I do not know what else I can do. I am 30 years old and currently 24 weeks pregnant with a baby girl due September 4, 2008. Although I began working full time at age 17 while attending high school and college I am currently unemployed and more importantly without insurance. Before I was pregnant I had a very successful career in retail management. I have degenerative disc disease and a few other issues with my back that I was born with. Although I have spent most of my adult life in pain I managed to keep working my way up the corporate ladder. Two years ago I was working for Sears Corporation in upper management while seeing a specialist in hopes of having disc-replacement surgery. After waiting over a year for my insurance company to approve the surgery I was told they did not approve it. Soon after my doctor's office contacted me and told me they would no longer be able to see me or give me my medications because I couldn't get the surgery. Without my medication I knew there was no way I would be able to continue to work 60 to 70 hrs a week so I soon found a less physical job that would be easier on my back and hips. I began working as a receptionist making \$12 an hour for a temporary agency in November 2007. It was a giant pay cut but the pro's outweighed the cons when it came to my physical well being since I couldn't have surgery or get my prescriptions. In January I started getting very sick and this continued into February. I soon found out I was pregnant. At first I was terrified because I had no insurance and at the time was living in Charleston away from my family in Florence.

I can't do anything for long periods of time whether it is sitting, standing or lying down and it soon got to the point where I could no longer work. I ended up moving back to Florence and am living in a family owned home. As soon as I moved back I made a Dr's appointment to make sure everything was ok and was instructed that if I don't have insurance, don't have a job and have very little income I should apply for Medicaid. This was difficult for me to take at first because I had never thought I would be in the position to where I would need government assistance. I went to the Medicaid office and began filling out the paperwork. When I got to the part on the application that was inquiring about proof of income I was confused as to what to put down. I asked the woman working there and she told me I needed to bring my past 4 weeks of check stubs. I told her I haven't worked in over 4 weeks so I didn't have any income and more importantly how could I prove something that I don't have. She told me that before I did anything I had to go to the unemployment office and get a print-out stating that I have not worked in the past 4 weeks. A few days later after I collected myself I went to the unemployment office. I told the lady at the front desk what I needed and I told her it was for Medicaid. She told me I had to file a claim. This confused me so I told her that I wasn't there to try and get unemployment benefits and that I knew I was not eligible for them. She called one of the other ladies over and asked her to be sure. The lady was very rude to me and said that it didn't matter whether I was eligible or not. Either way I still had to file a claim. I ended up having a seat at the computer and began typing in my SSN and other information. Soon after the computer pulled up my previous employers so I thought this meant I would get my printout so I continued to 'file my claim'. After I was done I went back to the front desk where the lady gave me a packet of information, told me I had to call some 800 number by the following Monday to see if my claim was accepted. She also said that I would receive the paperwork for Medicaid in the mail in the next few days. A week later I received a letter in the mail from unemployment but when I opened it, it wasn't what I was hoping for. It was a letter to be taken and filled out by my Dr. I was to bring it back to the unemployment office after having it filled out.

A few days later I received another letter from them; this one instructed me that I would be receiving a phone call on May 12, 2008 at 2:30 pm from a representative at the unemployment office.

At 2:30 today I received the phone call. The woman began by saying that she received a statement from my previous employer stating that I had made the decision to leave my previous position on my own. When she was done talking I then began explaining my situation. I started out by saying that yes, I chose to quit my job and then went on to say that I was 24 weeks pregnant and for the last 2 months have been trying to apply for Medicaid. I told her about my trip to the Medicaid office and what had occurred at the unemployment agency. She was very confused and told me herself that all this did not make any sense. She then said I needed to go back to the unemployment office and ask for proof that I had not worked in the past 4 weeks. When I told her for the second time that I when I went to the office that

is exactly what I asked for and even went so far as to explain to them why I needed it. She seemed even more confused and put me on hold. A few minutes later she was back and told me that I needed to make a statement to her over the phone. After that she would have to send all my information to the Columbia office where they would look it over, decide if I am eligible for unemployment, and then send me notification of this in the mail. This was very upsetting to me and I began crying hysterically. I explained to her that I am 24 weeks pregnant, no job, no insurance and have already been to the Doctor two times and according to the Doctor I can be seen by him 2 times while applying for Medicaid after which I have to begin paying for everything myself. I told her this was unacceptable. I have my next appointment on May 21 and with all this going on I won't be able to go back. She was not willing to help me and told me that all she could do was take my statement. She then said verbatim, "It doesn't matter to me whether you give your statement or not, you do whatever you want to" Granted this did not go over well seeing as I was crying for almost the entire conversation and ultimately hung up the phone.

The rest of the day I spent talking to friends and other people I knew had personal knowledge of the Medicaid system and procedures. Everyone I spoke to told me that something is wrong and that when they applied for Medicaid it was quite simple and not one of them ever had to file an unemployment claim. A long time friend of mine hadn't worked for over a year before she was pregnant and when she went to apply she filled out the form and told them she wasn't working and had no income other than a few hundred dollars a week from her boyfriend. A week later she had Medicaid and still does to this day.

It is now May 12, 2008 and my doctor's appointment is less than 2 weeks away. I desperately need help as I can not pay for these bills that now already exceed \$2000.00 on my own. I am afraid I will have no choice like many others I am afraid to no longer continue prenatal care for the remainder of my pregnancy. Perhaps I will have to just show up at the hospital when going into labor only to have my baby delivered by a Doctor who knows nothing about my medical conditions and will have to have Vaginal birth rather than Cesarean section as my current Doctor has already instructed that a C-section is the best way to go considering my back problems and other gynecology problems. Other than serious problems for my health is my baby's. I want her to be healthy and the last thing I want is an ER Doctor who nothing about me to bring her into the world.

I was told that I could never have children and when I found out I was scared but yet excited. I know there are people in my situation that are on government assistance and without it who knows where they would be or more importantly their children. There must be something someone can do to help me figure this out. I have exhausted all other means and this is my last resort. I know it is not healthy for me to be this stressed and upset at a time in my life when I should be happy that something I never thought could happen to me has happened. When I lost my insurance it was difficult for me to go about my life without

taking my pain medications and I didn't know what was going to happen. It was very hard for me even to walk up a few steps without my medication and now that I am pregnant and have not been able to take anything other than Tylenol I can barely get out of the bed just to go the bathroom or take a shower not to mention driving back and forth across town.

There must be someone who can help me. If South Carolina is serious about having no child left behind than please read this twice if you must because with all I have inside me I don't want my baby to be left behind.

Jennifer Zielinski
1913 McNeil Drive
Florence, SC 29501
(843) 669-6861
(843)496-7847

Log # 0615



State of South Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

Mark Sanford
Governor

Emma Forkner
Director

June 2, 2008

Jennifer E. Zielinski
1913 McNeil Drive
Florence, South Carolina 29501

Dear Ms. Zielinski:

Governor Mark Sanford asked our agency to assist with your concerns about Medicaid eligibility and your healthcare needs. Good customer service is important to us, and we regret the problems you encountered during our eligibility determination process. We are working to correct the problem.

We are pleased to inform you that your application for Medicaid's Optional Coverage for Women and Infants (OCWI) was approved effective May 1, 2008. OCWI offers the full range of Medicaid benefits. Pregnant women do not have to pay co-payments for Medicaid-covered services. If you have not received your *Healthy Connections* card and handbook, please call your eligibility worker, Ms. Aixa Ruiz, in our Florence office at (843) 673-1761, Ext. 108.

In the meantime, you may give your Medicaid ID number (1780875080) to your medical providers to verify you have coverage. Be sure your medical providers accept Medicaid before any services are rendered; otherwise, you will be responsible for paying the bill.

Again, we apologize for the difficulties you experienced during our application process. If you have any questions about the South Carolina Medicaid program, please call Denise Epps in Constituent Services at 1-803-898-2505 or 1-888-549-0820 (toll-free).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia Jacobs".

Alicia Jacobs
Executive Consultant

AJ/cole