

WRNI: “RI removing roadblocks for addiction treatment”
January 6, 2011

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RI removing roadblocks for addiction treatment

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by Megan Hall

It's common in the world of government bureaucracy to encounter unintended consequences of well intended laws.

Take this one- low income parents who struggle with drug or alcohol addiction and who qualify for RIte Care (the state's health insurance for low income children and families) lose their health insurance if they lose custody of their children.

That's because RIte Care only offers health care for FAMILIES, not individuals. But if parents lose their health insurance, they often can't afford to pay for drug and alcohol treatment programs, the exact thing they need to be able to reunite with their children.

So, the big bureaucracy that is the state's Department of Human Services is working to change that. By spring of this year, parents who are in active treatment who have lost custody of their children will remain on RIte Care.

Elena Nicolella, the head of the state's medicaid program, says it's just a matter of setting up the right system to put parents back on the RIte Care system once they've proved they're working on their addictions. She says those changes are “in the queue” right now.