



845 Wal-Mart employees on Medicaid in Iowa

DES MOINES Taxpayers are funding health care for hundreds of Wal-Mart workers in Iowa.

Wal-Mart employs 845 workers in Iowa who received benefits from the state's Medicaid program last year.

That's according to a report by the Iowa Department of Human Services obtained by The Associated Press.

Tyson Fresh Meats, Casey's General Stores and Hy-Vee also have hundreds of employees receiving state-funded health care.

Critics say the report shows that taxpayers are subsidizing profitable companies that offer inadequate wages and benefits.

Wal-Mart says it helps remove people from public assistance by providing jobs and health benefits to people who may otherwise be unemployed.

Critics say Wal-Mart's health insurance is too expensive for most workers.

They say stingy companies such as Wal-Mart are partly responsible for the fast growth of Medicaid, which gives health insurance to the poor and disabled.

The program faces a 170 (m) million budget deficit over the next 18 months.