



Virginia MIRC< vamirc@mirc.virginia.gov>

New MIRC Comment

1 message

Mon, Nov 18, 2013 at 3:27 PM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]

To: vamirc@mirc.virginia.gov

First Name - Erin

Last Name - Conaway

Organization Name - GW Colonials for Health - VA

Comment - Please support Medicaid Expansion in Virginia now. 430,000 Virginian's health status depends on it!



Letter to MIRC.pdf

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November 18, 2013

Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission
201 North 9th Street
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear members of the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC),

As both concerned graduate students from George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services and residents of Fairfax County, we are writing in regards to the Commonwealth's option to expand Medicaid. We strongly believe that Medicaid expansion is critical to successful healthcare insurance coverage to some 430,000 Virginians, including 30,000 residents of Fairfax County.¹ Medicaid works to grant subsidies and tax credits to individuals making between 138 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level, but, without it, people below this threshold will remain uninsured.

Twenty-nine other states have proactively moved toward this expansion - so why should Virginia forego this federally funded benefit that so many other states have decided is essential? Here are several reasons why we believe Virginia, with your help, should act now and move towards expanding Medicaid:

1. Fairfax County can't afford not to expand Medicaid. Fairfax County is one of the wealthiest counties in the United States, yet 1 in 10 of its residents lack health insurance.²

2. It is a boon for Virginia's economy. We recognize there are financial implications and healthcare accessibility concerns related to Medicaid expansion, but firmly believe the benefits to Virginia's economy severely outweigh the costs. New federal Medicaid dollars will travel through the state economy, improving employment, labor income, and capital income. New federal dollars will turn over multiple times in the state economy (for example, from physician to employee to grocer).³

3. Medicaid Expansion will keep residents' federal taxes, in the amount of \$1.64 billion over the next four years, flowing into Virginia and not into other states.⁴ Almost every state resident pays federal taxes, and federal dollars will fund the Medicaid Expansion. Taxpayers residing in states that do not implement the Expansion will be paying out dollars to states that do expand, states like CA, CT, CO, DC, MN, MO, NJ, and WA, which have already obtained approval for Medicaid Expansions.³ This means that if Virginia continues to opt out of this benefit, an astounding \$1.64 billion in tax payer's dollars will be funding states outside of Virginia over the next four years.⁴

4. Affording individuals and families the ability to seek healthcare will encourage preventive practices and routine management of diseases before costly interventions or emergencies arise. This shift in healthcare utilization will be beneficial to the Commonwealth's entire network of healthcare systems. The federal government will provide 100% of the necessary funding to states for the first three years, before gradually reducing to 90% thereafter. Between 2014 and 2022, a fully implemented Medicaid Expansion will cover 17 million lower-income people while increasing direct state Medicaid spending by only 2.8% more than if health reform had not been enacted.⁵



We understand that you are working hard with the rest of the MIRC to determine best solutions for the balanced prosperity of both Virginia's economy and the health of its people. Still, the research and facts support Medicaid expansion. We hope that you choose to act and support this decision in order to improve the well-being of hundreds of thousands of Virginians who ought to have the healthcare coverage they deserve.

I appreciate your help and ask that you please send me a response to let me know if you are able to support an affirmative vote for Medicaid Expansion in Virginia and thus, endorse a reform proposal to amend the State Plan for Medical Assistance under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Thank you for your time in considering my request.

Sincerely,

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References:

1. Fairfax County Health Care Reform Implementation Task Force. Action Plan (November 2010). Available at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthreform/pdf/hcrtf-action-plan-final-web.pdf>. Accessed September 13, 2013.
2. George Mason University, College of Health and Human Services, Department of Health Administration and Policy. Recommendations to the Fairfax County Health Care Reform Implementation Task Force (2012). Available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthreform/pdf/final-gmu-fairfax-county-report-5-17-12.pdf>. Accessed September 13, 2013.
3. Univ. of Arkansas Sam M. Walton College of Business, The Economic Impact of Medicaid Spending in Arkansas (May 2010); Christopher Dumas, PhD, et al., The Economic Impacts of Medicaid in North Carolina, 69 N.C. Med. J. 78 (March/April 2008). See also Kaiser Family Found., The Role of Medicaid in State Economies: A Look at the Research (January 2009).
4. Whorley M, Cassidy MJ. Medicaid Expansion Would Pay For Itself: Cost Savings, New Revenue Offset Cost of Expansion. The Commonwealth Institute. August 2013. Available at http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/medex_pays_for_itself.pdf. Accessed September 6, 2013.
5. Kaiser Commission on Medicaid & the Uninsured, How is the Affordable Care Act Leading to Changes in Medicaid Today? State Adoption of Five New Options (May 2012).