



October 10, 2013

To the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you in regards to Medicaid innovation and reform.

I am a member of Healthy Roanoke Valley which is a partnership of over 50 public and private organizations, academic institutions, community and government leaders. Our goal is to improve the health of those living in the Roanoke Valley. Our mission is *to mobilize community resources to improve access to care, coordination of services, and promote a culture of wellness*. We focus on the underserved populations in the region including the uninsured and underinsured.

We recently conducted a survey in the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area which includes the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke and the cities of Salem and Roanoke. The results show that there are more than 32,000 residents who are uninsured. It is this population group who is more likely to lack access to primary care, mental health, and dental services and is unable to pay for these services out-of-pocket. They are more likely to use the Emergency Departments for minor injury or illness that do not require emergency evaluation or treatment. Often they are unable to navigate the healthcare system; have limited health literacy; and have poor health outcomes due to lack of preventive care and chronic disease management.

Approximately 400,000 uninsured Virginians become eligible for healthcare by expanding Medicaid up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level in Virginia. In the Roanoke Valley, this includes 41% of the uninsured or more than 13,000 individuals. The majority of people who would be newly eligible for Medicaid coverage are working in the state's five largest employment sectors including tourism; retail trade; educational, health, and social services; construction; and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. (Commonwealth Institute, 2013)

I respectfully request that the Commission members to support Medicaid Expansion in Virginia. Medicaid expansion will ensure those we serve are able to get quality, consistent care at a lower cost resulting in improved health for our community as a whole. Medicaid expansion impacts our region and the state's economic health by creating a healthier, more productive workforce leading to growth in the state economy, more local jobs and a vibrant future for all our citizens.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shirley B. Holland".

Shirley B. Holland  
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