



Virginia MIRC <vamirc@mirc.virginia.gov>

---

## Support Medicaid Expansion

1 message

---

**Tyoei66** <tyoei66@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 15, 2013 at 2:27 PM

To: "vamirc@mirc.virginia.gov" <vamirc@mirc.virginia.gov>

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPad



**Support Medicaid Expansion.pdf**  
43K

Public Comments by Ting-Yi Oei

## Medicaid Expansion

I've come today, as a pvt. citizen, an educator, and as Chairman of the coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia, to urge you to recommend joining in the ME program. Just on the face of it, it seems incomprehensible to me that any state would turn down this program that would dramatically increase participation to so many who need medical care support when the money comes at no cost to the Commonwealth for three years. It does so precisely because the intent is to help ease the individual states into adjusting its own budgets to be able to carry forth the program after 3 yrs., with the fed. govt. **still** covering 90% after that. VA can then use the money saved in all sorts of ways that benefit its people. And that money in turn generates more economic activity - and revenue.

The WAPO in March (***Wash. Post editorial, March2013***) pointed out the situation in VA. In VA, medicaid expansion would open up the program to those with incomes up to 138% of the nat'l poverty level (\$32,000) for a family of 4. Under current practices, this state **punishes** its working poor by making many hard-working individuals and families go without health coverage because its threshold for qualifying for Medicaid is so difficult. Those who seek to buy insurance find it takes such a huge bite out of their take-home pay that there is nothing left over. I know this to be true, as do so many others, because we have close friends & family members who struggle to make ends meet - if they actually are able to make ends meet - knowing that serious medical conditions have consequences.

VA currently ranks 48th in per capita spending on Medicaid. The WAPO correctly asks, "Has the state's flinty tightfistedness become callous indifference?" citing the fact that VA ranks in the top 8 of the nation's wealthiest states. If Virginia simply chooses to participate, at least 400,000 of the state's one million uninsured people would become eligible for coverage. Four out of ten... Let that sink in... would now get coverage. How can you turn that down?

Some may argue that this is all just more spending, but one of the most significant and simple points being demonstrated in the economy's recovery is that stimulus works, and here is a program that puts \$\$\$ into the system, will provide 20,000 jobs by most estimates, provide needed relief and support for the working poor (who in fact need to spend the extra cash), keep community health centers open and its workers doing the jobs they are trained to do.

Why are so many businesses supporting the expansion here and elsewhere? Because they know that a healthy workforce is mandatory to their competitiveness and success. Why would VA want to put itself at a disadvantage with other states in competing for businesses that may want to come here.

Another criticism related to costs is alleged cost inefficiencies through govt. programs like Medicaid and Medicare. Steven Brill's brilliant articles in Time magazine earlier this year highlight the exorbitant costs of American health care and how the free market has failed us in this arena. Citing case after case, and using the now infamous "chargemaster" billing sheet that hospitals across the country use to arbitrarily set prices for various procedures and materials, such as alcohol swabs, he addresses the sheer expense of medical care in this country. He also points out that it is through Medicare and its strict review of costs for care and procedures actually brings efficiencies into the system that the major insurance carriers don't. The current reforms may not do nearly enough to rein in the costs of medical care in Va and across the country, but we should not worry about "another govt. program" costing us more money than the system we have.

Again I strongly urge your support of Medicaid Expansion in the Commonwealth.