



Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area
10560 Main St., Suite 419, Fairfax, VA 22030
(p) 703-352-7647 (f) 540-427-6589
hacacares.org; [REDACTED]

Virginia Hemophilia Foundation
PO Box 188, Midlothian, VA 23113
(p) 800-266-8438 (f) 800-266-438
vahemophilia.org; info@vahemophilia.org

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To the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission:

We are writing in support of Medicaid expansion, on behalf of the approximately 300 people living with hemophilia in Virginia.

Today, people with hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders can live productive lives because they are able to treat their disorders with clotting factor – medicine that prevents or stops potentially disabling bleeding episodes. These miracle drugs have rescued individuals from lifetimes of pain, damaged joints, and internal bleeding. With appropriate healthcare, people with bleeding disorders can work, attend school, and make positive contributions to their communities.

Not all of the people affected by hemophilia and other bleeding disorders have health insurance. Children who qualify are insured by Medicaid, but they lose their coverage when they turn 18. Without health coverage, individuals with bleeding disorders cannot access the medicine they need to preserve their health and can easily fall through the cracks in the healthcare system. We know today there are 38 young individuals in the Virginia Bleeding Disorders program who are insured by Medicaid and who will age out in 2014. Some of these individuals may find employment, but others, including some who will be attending college, will not be insured without expansion of Medicaid.

While a number of 38 individuals does not seem like many, the figure represents 11 percent of the people in Virginia with hemophilia. For these 38 individuals, as for the estimated 250,000-400,000 other Virginians who will be eligible for expanded Medicaid, access to Medicaid is the key to remaining healthy and productive members of society.

We would like to see Medicaid expanded as soon as possible. With each passing day beyond January 2014, Virginia stands to lose coverage for individuals who cannot otherwise gain insurance. Expanding Medicaid is the right thing to do. Please move on with it.

Handwritten signature of Kelly Waters in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Kelly Waters
VHF Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Karen Krzmarzick in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Karen Krzmarzick
HACA Executive Director