

Betsy Samuelson Greer
Individual

Comments on the Expansion of Medicaid

October 3, 2013

I am an advocate for individuals who live with mental illness. I support and urge you, the members of the Commission that will decide whether to expand Medicaid in Virginia, to vote to expand Medicaid coverage to individuals who are within 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. This is especially important for individuals who live with mental illness who have worked and are on federal social security disability insurance. While their disability income is not much, it sometimes – sometimes – exceeds Virginia's current eligibility cutoff of 80 percent of poverty level, which in a May 2012 Fiscal Year 2013 document, was \$8,936. Any individual whose income exceeded \$754 is ineligible for Medicaid coverage under existing regulation. Individuals on disability, because of the type and length of their work before becoming disabled, can easily exceed that cutoff – and still have insufficient funds to pay for their psychiatric care, their therapy or any of the state option services allowed under Medicaid. I do NOT understand the reluctance to expand Medicaid, especially given the fact that the Federal government will pay 90 percent of the costs of the expanded Medicaid. As a Virginian, I am seeing MY federal tax dollars go out of state to Maryland or New York instead of being retained to help Virginians in Virginia. Whatever is spent on expanded Medicaid will bring dividends to Virginia in better health care for a vulnerable portion of our population – individuals disabled with mental illness. Expand Medicaid.