



Sentara Healthcare
Executive Office
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David L. Bernd
Chief Executive Officer

October 10, 2013

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Chair, Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission
Virginia General Assembly Building
Richmond VA 23218

Dear Senator Hanger and Members of the Commission:

I am writing to you to ask that the Medicaid Innovation and Reform Commission (MIRC) strongly consider expanding Medicaid in 2014, as this funding will increase access for more than 350,000 additional Virginians. Last year Sentara Healthcare provided care to nearly 200,000 uninsured patients, many of whom avoided medical treatment until they were very sick. They turned to hospital emergency departments for treatments that could have been provided in a primary care physician's office. This pattern significantly lowers the health status of the Commonwealth and exponentially drives up costs to hospitals. It also shifts the financial burden to the privately insured population.

Medicaid is an extremely important source of health care coverage for Virginia's children, elderly, disabled and poor. We believe that it is imperative that Virginia, in a fiscally prudent fashion, seize on the expansion opportunity provided by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to foster overall Medicaid sustainability. I applaud the steps being taken by the MIRC to evaluate all opportunities for improvement; however, further delays leave taxpayer dollars on the table and holds Virginia's network of community hospitals hostage. The provider cuts embedded in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) occur with or without a Medicaid expansion. Sentara estimates that provider reimbursement changes and excise fees in the ACA along Medicare and Tricare cuts will equal at least \$30 million per year. Enrollment into Medicaid helps to offset these losses.

The Medicaid expansion provision would provide a tangible lifeline that, if taken, will help those currently caught between Medicaid or the income subsidies offered in the ACA Marketplace, and it will provide the much needed financial support to allow hospitals and health systems across the state to provide the necessary care to Virginians when they need it most. It will also help us provide the preventative and early intervention care these individuals and families need to stay healthy.

At Sentara Healthcare, our 25,000 employees are driven by one goal: to improve health every day. We are proud of the compassionate, high-quality care that we provide to every patient. We ask that you expand Medicaid to help us continue this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Bernd'.

David Bernd
CEO, Sentara Healthcare