



2018 Budget Hearing Talking Points

This document contains our key ask and facts that you may use to develop your statements for the upcoming budget hearings. While this information is meant to be a resource for you, this information cannot substitute for your passion, expertise, and individual stories. We all bring unique perspectives to this debate that lawmakers need to hear.

Topline Messaging

For 300,000 of our loved ones, next door neighbors, and members of our communities, access to affordable and quality health coverage remains out of reach.

- When people have access to health coverage, they are more likely to get the medical care they need and are more financially secure. Let's face it, everyone gets sick. Unfortunately, not everyone can afford to see a doctor.
- No Virginia family — from the foothills of the Allegheny to the shorelines of the Hampton Roads — should go bankrupt or have to choose between paying rent or their healthcare expenses when an emergency strikes.
- Governor McAuliffe's outgoing budget takes major strides to improve health coverage through proposing the expansion of Medicaid to cover an estimated 300,000 Virginians.

Our Ask

1. Preserve the budget language allowing Virginia to seek federal authority, specifically through a state plan amendment, to build upon the success of our Medicaid program and to ensure that more Virginia families have access to the health coverage they vitally need.

Why this is Important

- Virginia's Medicaid program plays a crucial role in providing health coverage for nearly 1 million Virginians, who are low-income parents, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and children. However, there is more we can do to improve access to health coverage for more Virginia families.
- We have a very restrictive Medicaid program, and it is one of the stingiest in the nation. In fact, Virginia ranks 46th in the nation for per person investments in our Medicaid program.
- This legislative session, we have an opportunity to draw down federal dollars to provide coverage for more low-income Virginians. This will allow Virginia to make long overdue investments in its behavioral health system and seriously address our state's ongoing opioid crisis.
- By making use of all of our available resources, our state would see a net savings of \$421.7 million over the biennium.
- Most importantly, Medicaid expansion would lead to health coverage for 240,000 uninsured Virginians who are stuck in the healthcare coverage gap.

Many have been waiting for help from you for over 4 years. It's time to close the coverage gap in 2018!



Budget Public Hearings — Sample Statement
(Public comments cannot exceed three minutes)

Greetings to the Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is _____. I am here today representing (organization) as well as over 100 other Virginia groups that make up the Healthcare for All Virginians coalition.

For 300,000 of our loved ones, next door neighbors, and members of our communities, access to affordable and quality health coverage remains out of reach. When people have access to health coverage, they are more likely to get the medical care they need and are more financially secure. Governor McAuliffe's outgoing budget takes major strides to improve health coverage through proposing the expansion of Medicaid to cover an estimated 300,000 Virginians.

As you work on this budget, I have one ask:

1. Preserve the budget language allowing Virginia to seek federal authority, specifically through a state plan amendment, to build upon the success of our Medicaid program and to ensure that more Virginia families have access to the health coverage they vitally need.

In my work / life, I know many people who absolutely depend on Medicaid for their care (tell a story or give an example of people who rely on Medicaid). And/or:

In my work/life, I know uninsured Virginians who are unable to get the healthcare they need or struggling with huge medical debt. (tell a story/example of people in the coverage gap)

Why this is Important

- Virginia's Medicaid program plays a crucial role in providing health coverage for nearly 1 million Virginians, who are low-income parents, older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and children. However, there is more we can do to improve access to health coverage for more Virginia families.
- We have a very restrictive Medicaid program, and it is one of the stingiest in the nation. In fact, Virginia ranks 46th in the nation for per person investments in our Medicaid program.
- This legislative session, we have an opportunity to draw down federal dollars to provide coverage for more low-income Virginians. This will allow Virginia to make long overdue investments in its behavioral health system and seriously address our state's ongoing opioid crisis.
- By making use of all of our available resources, our state would see a net savings of \$421.7 million over the biennium.
- Most importantly, Medicaid expansion would lead to health coverage for 240,000 uninsured Virginians who are stuck in the healthcare coverage gap. Many have been waiting for help from you for over 4 years. It's time to close the coverage gap in 2018!

Thank you for considering my comments.