



February 19, 2025

[first name] [last name]

[address]

[city], [state] [zip]

Subject: Protect Medicaid from Harmful Cuts – A Lifeline for Virginians

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name],

On behalf of thousands of Virginians with disabilities and their families, we urge you to oppose any cuts to Medicaid, a vital program that provides health care to over **1.9 million Virginians**, including children, people with disabilities, seniors, and low-income families. As Congress debates the federal budget, we ask that you stand up for the health and well-being of our communities by protecting Medicaid from harmful reductions in funding.

The Devastating Impact of Medicaid Cuts

Cuts to Medicaid would have serious consequences for Virginians, threatening access to care and placing additional burdens on families, healthcare providers, and the economy. Specifically, funding reductions would:

- **Harm People with Disabilities – 17,121 adults with developmental disabilities** in Virginia rely on Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services (HCBS) to live in the community. Because HCBS is an "optional service," it is particularly vulnerable to budget cuts, leaving many without the care they need.
- **Jeopardize Seniors' Health – 62% of Virginia's nursing home residents** depend on Medicaid as their primary payer. Cuts would put long-term care access at risk, forcing families into impossible situations.
- **Endanger Children's Health – 562,581 children** in Virginia rely on Medicaid for health coverage, including those with disabilities and chronic conditions. Cutting funds would lead to worse health outcomes and increased emergency room visits.
- **Strain Hospitals and Health Providers** – Medicaid cuts would financially burden hospitals, particularly rural and safety-net providers, forcing service reductions, layoffs, or closures that weaken our entire health care system.

- **Exacerbate Workforce Shortages** – Virginia is already facing a **direct care workforce crisis**. In 2023, the state had **99,950 direct support professionals**, but job openings for these roles are projected to nearly **double to 184,800 by 2032**. Medicaid cuts would further shrink this workforce, driving more people into costly institutional care or leaving them without needed support.
- **Threaten Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services** – Medicaid is the **single largest payer of behavioral health services**. Many intensive mental health and substance use disorder treatments are **not covered by private insurance** and, like HCBS, are considered "optional" services—meaning they could be among the first eliminated if Medicaid funding is reduced.

The Vital Role of Medicaid in Virginia

Medicaid is not just a safety net—it is **a pillar of Virginia’s healthcare system and economy**. Beyond providing direct health coverage, Medicaid plays a critical role in supporting hospitals, schools, workforce development, and the financial stability of families. In Virginia:

- **219,998 seniors and adults with disabilities** rely on Medicaid for health coverage.
- **118,363 Virginians** who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid depend on Medicaid to help cover out-of-pocket costs.
- Medicaid helps sustain **Virginia’s hospital systems** and **rural health clinics**, many of which would struggle to stay open without this funding.
- Medicaid provides critical **funding for health services in Virginia schools**, covering essential care such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, nursing support, and mental health services. **These services help children—especially those with disabilities—thrive academically and socially**, ensuring they receive the support they need to succeed in school.

Urging Action to Protect Medicaid

We strongly urge you to **reject any proposals that would weaken Medicaid** and instead advocate for measures that strengthen this essential program. Cutting Medicaid would not only hurt Virginia’s most vulnerable residents but would also **destabilize our healthcare system and economy**.

Thank you for your leadership and for prioritizing the health and well-being of our communities. We appreciate your time and consideration. Please reply with your support to Teri Morgan at teri.morgan@vbpd.virginia.gov or at 804-786-9369. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Teri Morgan

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

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