
Cover COVID-19 Services as “Emergency Only” Medicaid Services

Support HB2124 & Budget Amendments 313 #4H and #36S

Medicaid is required by federal law to provide “Emergency Only” services to any immigrant who (1) resides in the state and (2) is *financially* eligible for Medicaid but does not meet the specific requirements for non-citizens. (For example, most legal permanent residents with a Green Card must be in the U.S. for five years before qualifying for full Medicaid.)

Medicaid’s Emergency-Only services are now available for urgent health needs generally provided by hospital emergency departments (e.g., accidents, heart attacks, labor/delivery). As allowed by federal law, HB2124 appropriately broadens such services to COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines.

- The disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on black, brown and immigrant communities is well established. If low-income individuals in those communities are not encouraged to get tested, treated, and vaccinated through free and broadly available services, *all of us* suffer because of community spread. The Medicaid Emergency Only mechanism is in place to ensure access to this essential care for needy Virginians.
- At least 12 states have administratively declared this policy for their Medicaid programs. Those states can ensure and market free services and timely treatment to all low-income individuals, regardless of immigration status.
- **This bill is desperately needed *now*. Virginia must encourage all low-income immigrants to get COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines. This helps *all* Virginians by reducing the spread of the virus, long-term health issues, and death.**

This is truly a matter of life or death – not just for immigrants, but for all of us.

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