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## Health Care Expansion

**Background on Virginia's Healthcare Crisis:** About one in eight Virginians (874,000 people) is without any medical health insurance. Despite being one of the 10 wealthiest states, **Virginia ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> in terms of the number of uninsured people.** The vast majority of those without insurance are poor and live in families in which at least one person works.

There are many reasons why there are so many uninsured Virginians: 1) Virginia has one of the most restrictive Medicaid programs in the country – a working parent must earn less than \$6,000 a year to be eligible for coverage. **Virginia ranks 48th in per-capita Medicaid expenditures.** 2) Virginia is one of the 19 states that refused to accept federal dollars to expand health care coverage to poor people. Virginia could have covered **400,000 low-income families** had it been willing to draw down these dollars. 3) The number of employers in Virginia who provide health insurance to their workers is declining and those that are covered by employers' plan pay increasingly higher co-payments. Governor Terry McAuliffe has declared the Virginia opioid addiction crisis a public health emergency, but many of those who are addicted are unable to gain medical services due to lack of insurance.

**VICPP's position:** All major faith traditions support expanding coverage to assure that all people have adequate and affordable health insurance. VICPP supports:

- Drawing down federal Medicaid dollars or other federal dollars that may become available to expand healthcare to low-income Virginians.
- Expanding mental health services in Virginia.
- Expanding substance abuse services in Virginia.

Expanding mental health and substance abuse services in Virginia is clearly important for those with mental health or substance abuse problems. It will also reduce family violence and stress and keep people out of jails who are there simply because they have mental illness or substance abuse problems.

**Specific Bills:** VICPP supports the following budget proposal:

- The Governor's budget proposal includes money to expand services for mental health and substance abuse. VICPP supports the Governor's budget proposals on expanding mental health and substance abuse services.