

Oppose Budget Item 4-5.04 #1h

Additional Restrictions on Medicaid Funding of Abortion

Oppose budget Item 4-5.04 #1h and protect Virginia's most vulnerable citizens.

Budget Item 4-5.04 #1h prohibits state expenditures for abortion in cases of substantial endangerment to the woman's health or a totally incapacitating fetal physical deformity or mental deficiency. Virginia already severely limits public funding for abortion. Voting against this budget amendment does not imply support for broader public funding.

Background Information: Virginia participates in the federal Medicaid program in order to provide its most vulnerable citizens vital health care access. Medicaid offers comprehensive reproductive health care, including family planning, prenatal care, and services related to childbirth to families most in need of assistance.

As a participant in the federal Medicaid program, Virginia is mandated to provide abortion funding for low-income women in cases of rape or incest, as well as when a pregnant woman's life is endangered by a physical disorder, illness or injury. In addition to the federal mandates, Virginia law also permits assistance only in the following circumstances:¹

1) a physician certifies that the woman's **health** would be substantially endangered if the fetus were carried to term, after taking into consideration all physical, emotional, psychological, familial factors, including the woman's age;

Examples of conditions that can lead to health risks to a woman while pregnant:

When faced with the following conditions, the risk of continuing a pregnancy should be addressed on an individual case basis by a woman and her treating physicians:

• High blood pressure (eclampsia) • Diabetes • Heart Disease • Cancer • Stroke • Epilepsy

2) a physician certifies that the fetus will be born with a gross and totally incapacitating physical deformity or mental deficiency.

Examples of conditions that can lead to a non-viable pregnancy (lethal fetal conditions):

• Anencephaly • Lethal skeletal dysplasia • Intrauterine fetal demise • Lethal pulmonary hypoplasia • Fatal cardiac malformation
• Lethal multiple pterygium syndrome • Bilateral renal agenesis • Corpus callosum agenesis

Additional restrictions on funding for abortion jeopardize the well-being of Virginia families.

- In one study, 60% of respondents on Medicaid said that to pay for their abortion, they were forced to divert money that would otherwise be used to pay their daily and monthly expenses, such as rent, utility bills, food and clothing for themselves and their children. Some even resorted to pawning household goods to come up with the necessary cash to pay for an abortion.

Additional restrictions on funding for abortion care will NOT improve the budget situation.

- The Virginia Department of Health (Division of Women's and Infants' Health), though not having a dedicated budget for abortion procedures, will locate funds to pay for a procedure for women **only in cases of rape, incest, or severe fetal abnormality**. In 2006, VDH paid for 10 abortions; in 2007, 11 abortions; and thus far in 2008, 11 abortions.
- The Department of Medical Assistance Services (Medicaid) **only pays for abortions when the life or health of the eligible woman is at risk** per the Code of Federal Regulations (42 CFR 441.203). DMAS estimates the following annual costs for abortions covered by the Medicaid Program when the life or health of the pregnant women is threatened:
 - SFY 2006: 152 abortions estimated to cost \$217,096 (total funds)
 - SFY 2007: 149 abortions estimated to cost \$303,051 (total funds)
 - SFY 2008 (partial): 121 abortions estimated to cost \$138,796 (total funds)

¹ Va. Code Ann. §§ 32.1-92.1, -92.2 (Enacted 1982); 12 Va. Admin. Code §§ 30-50-110(A)(2), -140(F); Va Dep't of Medical Assistance Servs., Physician Manual, ch. IV, p. 52.

