



**HAV Press Conference
February 25, 2010**

Health Cuts are Bad for People

I am Kathy Mingledorff. I live in Manassas. I feel it is my duty to be here today as a mom and a March of Dimes volunteer to tell you why Medicaid and FAMIS have been so important to my family. My son Alex, was born 15 weeks early. Alex suffered many complications as a result of his premature birth, and he was covered by Medicaid for his first three years of life.

Alex had multiple emergency room visits for breathing and feeding problems. He required a feeding tube, special formulas, medications, and surgery to stabilize his severe reflux condition. I do not know how we would have been able to afford this care without Medicaid and FAMIS.

Alex was enrolled in FAMIS when he was three, since I went to work full time and my income was a little higher. My family now has private health insurance through my employer, although it does not cover everything that Alex needs.

FAMIS was there for my family when we needed it most. Alex has received continuous medical support from numerous medical specialists and therapists. As a fragile infant and a special needs child, his medical care costs have been very high. We could never have cared for him without FAMIS. But every child – sick or healthy - needs health insurance.

The FAMIS program in Virginia helps to meet this critical need for over 100,000 children and over 3000 pregnant women. I urge the General Assembly to remember my face and the picture of my son as you contemplate cuts to this vital program. Reducing eligibility to 175% of the poverty line would mean that 30,000 children and hundreds of pregnant women could lose their coverage and Virginia would give up \$70 million dollars from the federal government. It would make Virginia's eligibility lower than 49 other states and the District of Columbia. Virginia can and must do better than that. Virginia must make health care for children and pregnant women a top priority.

Every parent knows that kids get sick – they get hurt. Cuts to FAMIS and FAMIS Moms at a time when struggling families are feeling intense financial stress will burden them even more. A sick baby can happen to anyone and it happened to my family unexpectedly. Being eligible for Medicaid and FAMIS at critical times in Alex's life is why he survived and thrives today. Medicaid and FAMIS gave me the opportunity to care for my family, garner employment and now be able to pay for my own health insurance.