



HAV Press Conference  
February 25, 2010

## ***Proposed Health Cuts are Bad for People, Bad for Business, and Bad for Virginia***

### *Introduction*

**Jill Hanken** - Virginia Poverty Law Center

The HAV Coalition is unique. 65 different Virginia organizations have come together with one goal in mind – to improve access to health care in Virginia. You will recognize the organizations on our list – there are consumer groups, advocacy groups, businesses, major health providers and health safety net programs.

We launched the HAV Coalition in September. We recognized that while Virginia was considered “best for business” and “best managed state” – the Commonwealth was falling further and further behind in terms of access to quality health care for all its citizens. With a growing number of uninsured Virginians, inadequate payments to health care providers, and a fraying safety net, we united behind 3 common priorities:

- **Cover all Kids**
- **Improve Coverage for Working Adults**
- **Secure Adequate Payment for Providers**

There are separate fact sheets about these three issues in your packet, as well as a scorecard showing important health rankings for Virginia.

We knew this year would be a challenge and we are sensitive to Virginia’s budget crisis. But we hoped that legislators would remember that – especially during a recession – thousands of Virginia families are struggling just to get by and health care support is urgently needed. Likewise, we hoped that legislators would remember that protecting health programs that leverage federal dollars is an extremely important way to preserve jobs and support Virginia’s economy.

We do thank the House and Senate for reversing some of the health cuts in the introduced budget. Notably:

- Both bodies rejected the closure of the Staunton center providing acute inpatient psychiatric services for children
- The Senate restored funds to safety net providers (free clinics, community health centers and the Virginia Health Care Foundation); and
- The House lifted the proposed freeze on current Medicaid waiver slots

However, overall, Virginia's health programs are being slashed in a way that is turning the clock back decades; forfeiting hundreds of millions in federal dollars that support services, jobs and economic activity throughout the state; hurting children and other vulnerable populations.

In September the HAV Coalition said that health care for all Virginians was "Good for People, Good for Business, and Good for Virginia." Today, unfortunately, we must say "the proposed health cuts are Bad for People, Bad for Business, and Bad for Virginia".

Our speakers responding to why the proposed health cuts are Bad for People, Bad for Business, and Bad for Virginia will be:

- **Kathy Mingledorff** - representing the March of Dimes and the parent of a child who has been enrolled in FAMIS and Medicaid
- **Irving Taylor** - AARP
- **Molly Cheek** - licensed clinical social worker who provides mental health services to individuals covered by Medicaid
- **Dr. Tamera Barnes** - President of the Virginia College of Emergency Physicians
- **Ali Faruk** - Interfaith Center on Public Policy

To conclude: Healthcare for All Virginians will continue to urge the General Assembly to avoid the most harmful health cuts. Since our focus is on access to basic health services, we are most concerned about the eligibility changes in FAMIS and Medicaid that will deny coverage to tens of thousands of children and very low income elderly and disabled. And since patients must depend on providers for their basic care, we must also strenuously object to many of the cuts in provider payments.