

**SUPPORT BUDGET AMENDMENT 312 #2h AND 313 #28h**

**Increase the age that “legally residing” immigrant children**

**can qualify for Medicaid and FAMIS.**

In 2012, Virginia adopted Medicaid and FAMIS coverage for “Legally Residing” children and pregnant women. “Legally Residing” is a broad term that includes any documented immigrant status, including valid visas.

Currently, “legally residing” immigrant children in Virginia qualify for coverage up to their 19th birthdays.

Federal law allows this optional coverage to continue up to age 21.

Raising the age threshold would protect continuity of care for these young people, which is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Without this change, on the day the child turns age 19:

* FAMIS coverage abruptly ends. The individual will need to go through the often complex process of shifting to individual Marketplace coverage. That private coverage will have higher out-of-pocket costs (premiums, deductibles, co-pays) which may be unaffordable.
* Those enrolled in Medicaid who do not qualify for Medicaid in another category will also need to shift to individual Marketplace coverage, with high out-of-pocket costs. (For example, the individual cannot switch to Medicaid expansion coverage for adults unless s/he has lived in the U.S. for a full five years and meets other restrictions on non-citizens.)
* Many young immigrants will become uninsured.
* Those with the lowest income (under Medicaid financial limits) would qualify for Medicaid “Emergency Only” services.

Virginia should utilize this available federal option to its fullest to ensure ongoing health coverage for these young immigrants who are legally residing in the United States.

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