



West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
Consumer Voices for Health Care

Health Care Review

Volume 2

December 2019

Issue 2

Gearing Up for a Healthy 2020

As we get ready for 2020 we have a lot of exciting things in store here at WVAHC. For the second year in a row, we have worked with partner organizations and individuals to create a West Virginia Health Agenda. These are policy ideas that we believe would make West Virginians healthier.

In 2019, we identified four pieces of potential legislation and had some success during the legislative session. For 2020, we have identified 11 policies ideas that could positively benefit a wide variety of our citizens from changes to Medicaid, options for covering more children with health insurance, addressing the IDD waitlist, and others (see the “West Virginia Health Agenda 2020” in this issue).

As part of our work around these issues, we received a two-year grant from the RX Foundation to increase grassroots capacity in the state of West Virginia. Working with the WV Citizens Action Education Fund and the WV Center on Budget and Policy, we are using this grant to put tools and power into the hands of the very citizens that benefit from good public healthcare policy. We are excited to see how we can empower communities across the state to work towards positive changes in our healthcare policies.

As a result of the hard work of our staff and our vision for the future, we recently received the good news that we were approved for a Benedum Foundation grant for 2020. We have been enthusiastically supported by Benedum and we appreciate how they have partnered with us over the years to help us fulfill our mission around Medicaid, the ACA, our health agenda, and children’s healthcare issues and coverage.

Because of the support of our funders, in 2020 we also will continue to focus on issues of children’s health. We worked hard in 2019 to continue our coalition of organizations through the Kids’ Health Partnership and will be continuing this Partnership in the next year. We hope to use this as a springboard for identifying critical health care policy needs specific to our youngest population. Stay tuned for information about this Partnership throughout the year.

Information about upcoming meetings and events can be found on the Children’s Health Collaborative Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WVCHC/>).

Rounding out our 2020 work will include being vigilant to threats to the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid and encouraging positive related policy. We will continue to monitor developments around these programs. Watch our website (www.wvahc.org) and our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WVAHC/>) throughout the year to stay informed and up to date!

Follow us on  @ <https://twitter.com/WVAHC>
and on  @ <https://www.facebook.com/WVAHC>

2019 Legislative Victories!

WVAHC worked with our partners – including other consumer advocacy groups, provider organizations and Medicaid managed care organizations - to achieve significant victories in the 2019 state legislature:

- Expanded coverage to pregnant women to 300% FPL with two months of post-partum coverage
- Added 386 Intellectual/Developmental Disability HCBS waiver slots to reduce our waiting list by one-third
- Defeated another legislative push to establish a harmful Medicaid work requirement
- Passed two provider assessment bills that are projected to provide a total of about \$120 million dedicated dollars in new Medicaid revenue a year: a new health insurance premium assessment based on the number of Medicaid enrollees and an increase in our hospital provide tax.

Special thanks to the Center on Budget and Policy and the Citizen Action Group for their work on these issues.

WV Insulin Caravan to Canada



On Sunday, December 8th, our story collection coordinator was able to support and attend the WV Insulin caravan which took a trip from Morgantown to Niagra Falls, Canada. Five

West Virginians from across the state, along with supporters and health care advocates, departed early Sunday morning, in the first attempt by the West Virginia chapter of Insulin4All to assess how feasible it would be for West Virginians to find more affordable insulin in Canada. With multiple individuals finding affordable insulin this trip will not be the last.

Thanks to West Virginians for Affordable Health Care board member Delegate Barbara Fleischauer and other health care advocates who organized the trip. Insulin-dependent attendees saved over 50% on some of their medications and were able to get a three-month supply, which you cannot receive in the United States.

If you want to join in support for legislation that will cap insulin prices for West Virginians or you have your own insulin dependency story and want to make an impact in policy, join our advocacy team and share your story with us! Email our Story Collection Coordinator, foster@wvahc.org.

Insulin Petition

Did you know that more than 15% of all West Virginia adults have diabetes and another 11% of West Virginians have pre-diabetes. Join WVAHC for asking that our legislature address the high cost of insulin by [signing our petition here!](#)

West Virginia Health Agenda 2020

Health care is one of the most important issues for West Virginia voters. A majority of voters support expanding affordable health coverage and care options, and initiatives that will lower health care prices. While there is gridlock at the federal level, there is ample opportunity for bipartisan investments to expand access to affordable health care at the state level.

First and foremost, West Virginia Medicaid is a critical health care safety net for a third of West Virginians. Our families cannot withstand the physical and financial health challenges if our state reduces spending on Medicaid and forces cuts to essential benefits or eligibility.

Second, West Virginia can move forward to improve Medicaid by using “Medicaid surplus funds” as well as additional state funds to drawn down significant new federal matching dollars waiting on the table to pay for coverage and care for West Virginia families.

Third, West Virginia can move forward to invest in all families through initiatives that reduce the cost of health coverage, necessary care and prescription drugs, and enable all our families to remain healthy. We support initiatives to address social determinates of health such as food security and housing assistance in all health care and coverage programs, and to expand the use of EPSDT and other Medicaid supports for prevention and early intervention to help children and youth and strengthen families.

Specifically, we propose that our legislature can:

- **Expand Medicaid coverage to one year postpartum for women up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level**
- **Provide expanded dental care for Medicaid-enrolled adults**
- **Increase funding in the 2021 Budget to clear the Medicaid I/DD waiting list**
- **Create a workforce promotion program for Medicaid enrollees**
- **Address the high-cost of prescription drugs for all West Virginia families**
- **Create a Medicaid Buy-in Program to increase choice and improve affordable health coverage options for West Virginians transitioning to a job without affordable health insurance**
- **Create a Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) buy-in to close children’s coverage gaps**
- **Use settlements from Pharma Opioid lawsuits to support children in West Virginia’s foster care system**
- **Create a Minority Health Advisory Team to advise the Commissioner of Public Health on addressing health disparities**
- **Enact Paid Family and Medical Leave for West Virginia workers**
- **Protect West Virginians from pre-existing condition exclusions in case of reversal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)**
- **Pass legislation to end surprise medical bills**

[Read more here!](#)

Rockefeller Lifetime Achievement Award

Do you know someone who has made an inspiring difference to ensure that West Virginians have access to affordable healthcare? West Virginians for Affordable Healthcare is seeking nominations for our annual Rockefeller Award to recognize those who go above and beyond in their healthcare efforts. Please consider nominating someone deserving that you know [using this link!](#)

WVAHC Kids' Health Program

The WVAHC Kids' Health Program staff enjoyed an eventful year of fulfilling its mission to ensure all of West Virginia's kids have access to comprehensive, affordable health care.

The Kids' Health Partnership—funded by the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, with the mission to build bridges between health care, schools, and community services—connects over 200 organizations and individuals on a variety of health-related issues on multiple platforms.

We connect via a weekly newsletter, monthly meetings and on social media, on the Year of the Child Campaign Facebook and Twitter sites. This year we took deep dives into such topics as:

- *Getting to 100% kids' health insurance coverage*
- *Schools, students and the drug crisis in West Virginia*
- *Parent engagement strategies*
- *Food insecurity*
- *Great summer programs for kids*
- *Taking Back the Narrative: Addressing stigma in the media/public discourse*

We will continue to work to keep our members connected to current events and state and local policies affecting the health of West Virginia's kids. If you would like to join the Partnership, please email info@wvahc.org.

Again, this year we held our Kids' Health Policy Roundtable series around the state, with events in Morgantown, Martinsburg, Huntington and Charleston. We are incredibly grateful for our partnering organizations this year: the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities, the West Virginia Nurses Association and Future of Nursing West Virginia, the West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the West Virginia Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Coalition.

Keep an eye out for reports from these events before the end-of-the-year. We hope the recommendations identified in these documents will inform legislators as we head into session in January.

The Children's Health Collaborative Process

The Children's Health Collaborative project was born out of a grant received from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2017. The focus of this project was connecting West Virginia's schools and students with local health care organizations and social supports. Its goal was to discover if the needs of our youngest residents were being met and to find out what services they might still need.

To start this project, our Director of Child Health, Kelli Caseman, created a survey that was sent to all 55 counties. Over 780 people responded. The top two findings were that respondents felt that our children were not getting adequate health care and that they felt the school was an appropriate place to receive it.

One of the next steps in the work plan was holding community meetings around the state. We asked the same questions at every meeting to find out what access students had to health care and support services. We went into 13 different counties to hold these

meetings and built many great relationships with those who are working hard to protect West Virginia's kids.

There were many facets to this project, and we hope, in some capacity, it continues. We created a Collaborative Facebook group that has over 200 members. We have an email list of over 700 subscribers. WVAHC staffers wrote two Medicaid-in-Schools primers that have come out of this project and its findings. The reports go into great detail about why Medicaid is important to West Virginia's schools, what services are funded, and potential ways to expand the program. We have created a policy team made up of volunteers from our community meetings to help us create model policies that can be used by the schools statewide.

We are really proud of the work we've done on this project, and the great people we've met along the way. There's great potential to expanding health care in schools.

Mark your calendar!

Friday, January 31, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**WV Culture Center
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, West Virginia**



WV Policy Prescriptions for Healthy Families is an event focused on healthier families in West Virginia. Learn how you can be a part of the change. We envision a state where everyone receives the health care and preventive care that they need. Social determinants of health have been a factor for West Virginians and have impacted their health later in life. Join us in exploring what complete health care for West Virginia looks like. If your organization would like to speak at the end of our program - [Please register now!](#)



West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
Consumer Voices for Health Care

**600 Leon Sullivan Way
Suite 215
Charleston, West Virginia 25301**

681.265.9008

info@wvahc.org
<http://wvahc.org>

Membership Form

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

Reminder... We are only as strong as your support!

Please consider how to contribute!

_____ \$20 **Concerned Citizen**

_____ \$50 **Health Booster**

_____ \$100 **Mountain Strong**

_____ \$500 and up **Health Care Champion**

_____ **Action Supporter:** Students/under-employed folks -- signup as a member and share information on issues with friends; write letters to the editor to share your concerns on health care topics, make your legislators aware of how much health care issues mean to you!

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

(Please print clearly)

- All members receive our quarterly newsletter online
- For more information on other member benefits and on sponsorship/partnership please go to our website at <http://wvahc.org/>

Please return your membership form to:

WVAHC, 600 Leon Sullivan Way, Suite 215, Charleston, West Virginia 25301