



West Virginians for Affordable Health Care  
 Consumer Voices for Health Care

## FEBRUARY 2018

WHAT WE HAVE  
 BEEN UP TO

TINY HEARTS DAY

YEAR OF THE  
 CHILD

## MISSION

*Our mission is to bring consumer voices to public policy so that every West Virginian has quality, affordable health care and the opportunity to lead an informed, healthy and productive life.*

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## WHAT WE HAVE BEEN UP TO

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care (WVAHC) works with partners to identify and advocate for positive public policy change, develop and coordinate innovative public education programs, protect and preserve programs that serve our mission, and assist individual consumers in navigating the health care system in an effort to obtain better care, encourage smarter spending and create a healthier West Virginia.

To carry out our mission, WVAHC engages in multiple projects:

### DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION

WVAHC is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to protect and promote health insurance coverage for children and families. We have made great gains in West Virginia in covering children through Medicaid and CHIP. Nearly 98% of all West Virginia children are covered by health insurance. However, changes to Medicaid and CHIP and loss of refundable tax credits in the Marketplace could jeopardize that progress. WVAHC provides education and policy analysis of any state or federal proposals that change the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid and CHIP. Our goals are to maintain the West Virginia Medicaid and CHIP Programs at their current levels to maintain coverage for children and families and to engage in and inform the federal debate over the future of coverage for children and families.

### CLAUDE WORTHINGTON BENEDUM FOUNDATION

WVAHC has long been supported by the Claude Worthington Benedum

Foundation for work to defend and preserve Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through the work of the West Virginia Medicaid Coalition and the West Virginia Kids Health Partnership.

The West Virginia Medicaid Coalition is an assemblage designed to protect the Medicaid expansion. Stakeholders work to ensure that children, seniors, those with disabilities, the poor and working families have a voice that advocates for access to quality health care coverage. The Medicaid Coalition enables WVAHC to educate the public and policy makers on the importance of Medicaid in West Virginia. The Coalition creates a space that lends itself to the sharing of important information amongst health care providers, insurers, social service providers, managed care organizations and advocates.

The West Virginia Kids Health Partnership (WVKHP) advocates for children's health policies. The mission of WVKHP is to build bridges between health care, social supports, and community services to improve the quality of children's health care by bringing together payers, providers, manage care organizations, children's advocates, and state agencies to support and promote health services for children using the theme Year of the Child.

### MOUNTAINEER AUTISM PROJECT

WVAHC is the lead agency for the Mountaineer Autism Project (MAP). MAP is an organization composed of

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

02/14/18

TINY HEARTS DAY

8:30-2:00 PM

WV CAPITOL COMPLEX

02/15/18

MEDICAID COALITION MEETING

10-12PM

TRADES BUILDING

02/28/18

YEAR OF THE CHILD

9:00-3:00 PM

WV CULTURE CENTER

04/11/18

WOMENS HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

TIME AND PLACE TBA

## WHAT WE HAVE BEEN UP TO

whose aim is to have one voice dedicated to providing accurate and up-to-date information, empowering parents, supporting best practices and making lasting changes in the state to enable West Virginia's children with autism to achieve their highest potential. MAP provides advocacy, family support, and information resources.

### WEST VIRGINIANS TOGETHER FOR MEDICAID CAMPAIGN

The West Virginia Together for Medicaid Campaign brings together a partnership of many diverse organizations – both policy shops and state/local grassroots organizations – as well as individuals from across our state dedicated to defending Medicaid and access to affordable health insurance.

The Campaign is convened by WVAHC with funding from the Community Catalyst Health Justice Fund. Campaign partners work together to create a steady educational drumbeat through traditional and social media on the benefits of Medicaid to West Virginia. The partners prepare policy analyses of proposed changes to the program at the federal and state levels.

In 2017, the Campaign worked to stop a series of bills in Congress that would have slashed federal funding for Medicaid by as much as 32 percent. In 2018, we again face threats from Congress, and are closely watching the state Medicaid budget. We also are working together to educate state policy makers about the potential devastating impact of a proposed special West Virginia waiver from the federal Medicaid statute that would knock off many current low-income West Virginians from Medicaid.

Today, one-third of all West Virginians rely on Medicaid – low-income children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, seniors, people who need long-term care, and people who work lower-wage jobs with no health benefits. Medicaid is the

key to our efforts to detect and prevent, as well as treat, opioid addiction in our communities. If you want to help us stand up for this critical program, you can sign up at <http://wvahc.org>.

### WEST VIRGINIA CHILDREN'S HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

WVAHC is a recipient of the Consumer Advocacy for Transformation grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This support allows us to foster an innovative partnership between children's health policy experts, health providers, educators, parents and community leaders who share the common goal of having every West Virginia child enrolled in insurance coverage, linked to a doctor's office or primary care provider, and receiving coordinated and continuous needed care and social services. This initiative is called the Children's Health Collaborative Project.

Although West Virginia is a national leader in uninsured children reduction, we still see our children's overall health ranked close to the bottom. We face special challenges as a rural and poor state.

A growing number of West Virginia children are in disrupted families, and even with insurance cards in hand, it is difficult to link these children to a medical home and coordinated, continuous care. The West Virginia Children's Health Collaborative seeks to strengthen the links between children and health care by developing a state-wide comprehensive picture of what is happening in schools and communities with regard to children and health care, share our findings, and replicate great programs while advocating for policy changes that will bridge the gap between the many health care and health care related services available for children.

## TINY HEARTS DAY

Tiny Hearts Day is a joint event between WVAHC and the West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and will be held at the State Capitol Complex on February 14.

Pediatricians will be at the Capitol to advocate for our state's tiniest residents. They will be focusing on the unmet health care needs of kids affected by the opioid crises.

Hopefully, working together for at least one day can make these kids' needs a priority for the legislature.

To register for Tiny Hearts Day:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tiny-hearts-day-tickets-41596838263?aff=erelpanelorg>

To register for Year of the Child:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-year-of-the-child-day-at-the-capitol-tickets-41958629390>



## YEAR OF THE CHILD

A generation of West Virginia's kids is drowning in the devastating effects of the opioid crisis. Many have no permanent place to call home, no permanent person to call a parent, and no plan to get back on their feet. They float between government systems that they rely on for care -- like schools, foster care, or child welfare. A growing number of kids are homeless, living in extended families, in foster care, and in residential facilities. Some even live in WVDHHR offices and hotels. What kind of childhood is this?

Join us for the kickoff of the "Year of the Child" campaign on February 28 at the West Virginia Cultural Center. The campaign is a year-long event, created to form a critical mass of West Virginians who will help steer these kids towards safer shores and healthier outcomes.

Come for breakfast or lunch at the Culture Center. Meet stakeholders. Learn more. Share your thoughts and become part of the solution.

For more information, call 304.444.5917 or email [info@wvahc.org](mailto:info@wvahc.org).



### Medicaid Coalition Membership Update

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care is currently updating our Medicaid Coalition membership list. If you would like to continue receiving communications about Medicaid, please update your contact information per the membership form sent via email last month. If you no longer wish to take part or can no longer locate your membership form, please contact LaTonya Fuller, Medicaid Coalition Coordinator, at your earliest convenience. ([latonya@wvahc.org](mailto:latonya@wvahc.org))