

A Cancer Diagnosis is an Emergency

Expand Emergency Medicaid to include treatment for people who are diagnosed with cancer by supporting Budget Amendment 288 #20s (Sen. Deeds)!

Emergency Medicaid should cover cancer treatment.

We all know someone who has received a cancer diagnosis, which is a stressful and difficult time for anyone. Unfortunately, too many of our neighbors need to navigate a complicated and sometimes inaccessible system to access treatment after a cancer diagnosis. Currently, if people with cancer are uninsured and barred from Medicaid due to immigration status, they are at the mercy of hospital payment plans or charity care.

Cancer doesn't discriminate based on health coverage, so neither should Emergency Medicaid. A budget amendment introduced in the 2025 legislative session would grant qualifying people with cancer access to Emergency Medicaid, which will save lives and allow families to focus on treatment.

- In 2019, over 45,000 new cancer cases were reported in Virginia.
- Roughly 775 people newly diagnosed with cancer in Virginia are undocumented and uninsured, with limited access to other health coverage options.
- Adults in their 30s, 40s, and 50s are more likely than previous generations to develop 17 different types of cancers, including breast, liver and pancreatic cancers.

Emergency Medicaid can be a tool to save more lives.

- Emergency Medicaid is available to income-eligible individuals who would otherwise qualify for Medicaid but for their immigration status and covers life-threatening medical conditions that require immediate treatment.
- States have some flexibility to decide what services to cover, and six states (CA, IL, NY, WA, MN, OR) already cover cancer treatment as an Emergency Medicaid service.
- This program is state and federally funded, meaning Virginia will receive a generous federal match.
- Services would include surgery, radiology, and lab tests to track cancer treatment progress.
- People would also have access to medications for treating cancer, side effects, comorbidities, and complications under severe health risk conditions.

Invest in a healthier Virginia.

State lawmakers should take action and support Budget Amendment 288 #20s (Sen. Deeds) to expand Emergency Medicaid to cancer treatment services. This would make sure that more of the approximately 45,000 Virginians who will be diagnosed with cancer can access treatment, regardless of their wealth or immigration status. The 2025 legislative session presents an opportunity to remove barriers to cancer treatment and demonstrate Virginia's commitment to equitable, life-saving health care access for all residents.