

## FAMILIES FORWARD VIRGINIA

# 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OUTCOMES REPORT

### Expand Home Visiting

The budget conference report included a language only Budget Amendment to begin the work to develop a home visiting Medicaid benefit!

“AAAAAA. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) shall convene a workgroup and make recommendations on a Medicaid home-visiting benefit to support members’ health, access to care and health equity. The workgroup shall include representatives from DMAS, Managed Care Organizations, the Virginia Department of Health, the Department of Health Professions, licensed and unlicensed providers of maternal and child health services, Early Impact Virginia, stakeholder groups, and community organizations. The workgroup shall: (i) analyze federal and state regulations and funding mechanisms impacting establishment of a Medicaid home visiting benefit; (ii) review home visiting strategies and benefits implemented in other state Medicaid programs; (iii) analyze and make recommendations on appropriate services and rates to be included in a Medicaid home visiting benefit; and (iv) project estimated costs over the next five years. The department shall report on the results and recommendations of the workgroup to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1, 2021.”

Other related maternal health items:

- **12 months of postpartum health coverage** for pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid. This change will help ensure pregnant women can obtain health and mental health services longer than 60 days postpartum. This benefit is out for public comment: CHIP Demonstration ([virginia.gov](http://virginia.gov))
- **Prenatal health care coverage for economically disadvantaged mothers who are undocumented immigrants.** Currently Medicaid will only cover delivery services for undocumented mothers and not preventative prenatal care.
- **A Medicaid-funded doula benefit** for eligible moms to obtain doula care during pregnancy, delivery and post-partum follow-up.
- **Fetal & Infant Mortality Review Team** created by HB1950 patroned by Del Hala Ayala. This bill directs the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner at the Va. Department of Health to convene a work group to develop a plan for the establishment of a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Team.
- **Maternal Health Data Quality Task Force** created by HB2111 patroned by Del Herring. This bill creates a Task Force on Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures to evaluate maternal health data collection processes to guide policies in the Commonwealth to improve maternal care, quality, and outcomes for all birthing people in Virginia.

## Reform Child Welfare System

- **Children's Cabinet** – This budget amendment was not included in the conference budget.
- **Kinship supports** – SB 132 patroned by State Sen Monty Mason creates the State-Funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance program to facilitate child placements with relatives, including fictive kin, and ensure permanency for children.

## Strengthening Economic Supports for Families

- Paid sick leave for home health workers - HB2137 patroned by Delegate Guzman provides paid sick leave to Medicaid funded home health care providers. This is not as broad a bill as we hoped, but it provides paid sick leave to a crucial group of workers that will help their families.
- Broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP/TANF increases income limits and eliminates the “asset test” (when families have more than \$2,500 in savings).
- \$8.3 million to Increase TANF by 10% - increases the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits by 10 percent. The General Assembly provided a 15 percent increase beginning July 1, 2020, bringing the average monthly payment for a TANF family to \$361.
- \$2.1 million to Implement TANF IDA to help build savings - This amendment implements a program so that TANF-eligible individuals may save funds in an individual development account (IDA) established for the purposes of home purchase, education, starting a business, transportation, or self-sufficiency.

## Parental Resilience & Success

Better address co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse – About \$750K of funding was restored to the new Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention fund over the biennium.

## Changing Social Norms to Promote Positive Parenting

Racial equity/racial trauma – HB 537 patroned by Delegate Lashrecse Aird officially recognizes that racism is a public health crisis in Virginia. Calls on relevant state agencies to take steps to address systemic racism and its impact on public health. This passed the General Assembly and is an important step in making racial equity a formal public policy priority for the Commonwealth.

## Provide Quality Care and Education Early in Life

- HB2206 increases income eligibility for child care assistance to \$89,000 for a family of four and allows families to be eligible when looking for work. Currently, the enhanced eligibility will be in effect through July 31, 2021. The bill also eliminates the child support enforcement requirement permanently. The value of assistance depends on locality, age of child and type of provider but it is a significant cash value. For example, a family in Henrico County with an infant would receive about \$1,000 per month for full-time care. Interested families must apply through their local DSS or the CommonHelp portal and must enroll at an approved subsidy vendor or encourage their child care provider to become approved. \*Begins ASAP, when signed by Governor Northam\*
- SB1316 from Senator Jennifer McClellan directs the state to create a pilot program using state/federal child care funds to pay for child care through grants and contracts, or enrollment, and to evaluate measures that afford the true costs of higher quality including higher wages and wraparound services.
- The final budget includes \$5 million in early educator incentive grants to help increase wages by providing a \$1,500 incentive for early educators in publicly funded programs.

