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Governor Northam Announces Additional Actions to Address COVID-19

Co-pays eliminated for all Medicaid-covered services, tax relief, small businesses can begin applying for low-interest federal disaster loans

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced further actions to protect public health and support Virginians impacted by the spread of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Video of today's media briefing is available here.

Increased Access to Health Care

Working with the Department of Medicaid Assistance Services, Governor Northam is increasing access to health care for Virginia's 1.5 million Medicaid members and thousands of low-income residents. These actions include:

- Eliminating all co-payments for services covered by Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS), including COVID-19-related treatment as well as other medical care.
- Ensuring current Medicaid members do not inadvertently lose coverage due to lapses in paperwork or a change in circumstances.
- Permitting Medicaid members to obtain a 90-day supply of many routine prescriptions, an increase from the 30-day supply under previous rules.
- Waiving pre-approval requirements for many critical medical services, and enacting automatic extensions for approvals that are already in place.
- Expanding access to telehealth services, including allowing Medicaid reimbursement for providers who use telehealth with patients in the home.

Guidance for Child Care Providers

Governor Northam has directed the Department of Social Services to modify Virginia's Child Care Subsidy program, which is currently caring for 25,000 children, to increase support and flexibility for enrolled families and providers. These modifications include:

- Expanding eligibility for school-aged children currently designated for part-day care to full-day care.
- Increasing the number of paid absences from 36 to 76 days for both level 1 and level 2 providers.
- Automatically extending eligibility for families due for eligibility redetermination in the near future by 2 months and temporarily suspending the requirement for face-to-face interviews.

As announced yesterday, the Northam administration has released guidance for child care providers to slow the spread of COVID-19, while ensuring continued support for essential personnel. These guidelines include:

- Childcare providers should limit capacity to 10 total individuals per room and prioritize care for children of essential personnel.
- Children should eat meals in their own classrooms and increase distance as much as possible, such as allowing only one classroom at a time to go outside and staggering exits and entrances to reduce contact.
- Staff and children should focus on basic health precautions, including regular hand washing and cleaning frequently touched objects.

Support for Impacted Businesses

Following a request submitted by Governor Northam on March 18, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today approved an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration for Virginia. Small businesses and nonprofit organizations throughout the Commonwealth affected by the COVID-19 public health crisis can now apply for low-interest federal disaster loans of up to $2 million from the SBA to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other expenses. To submit a loan application through the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, please visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/.

Businesses impacted by COVID-19 can also request to defer the payment of state sales tax due tomorrow, March 20, 2020, for 30 days. When granted, businesses will be able to file no later than April 20, 2020 with a waiver of any penalties.

The Governor has requested that the Department of Taxation to extend the due date of payment of Virginia individual and corporate income taxes. While filing deadlines remain the same, the due date for individual and corporate income tax will now be June 1, 2020. Please note that interest will still accrue, so taxpayers who are able to pay by the original deadlines should do so.

Justice-Involved Population

Local, regional, and state public safety agencies are working in close coordination to ensure the safety of employees and residents in correctional facilities. The following information is issued jointly by the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), the Virginia Sheriffs Association

(VSA), the Virginia Association of Commonwealth's Attorneys (VACA), the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission (IDC), and the Virginia Association of Regional Jails (VARJ).

The Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) has suspended all in-person visitation to state correctional facilities and is complying with guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control related to COVID-19. VADOC has also suspended all transfers from local and regional jails for the next 30 days to limit potential exposure to the virus.

Governor Northam is encouraging local criminal justice officials, including Commonwealth's attorneys, defense attorneys, sheriffs, and other jail officials, to explore proactive measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring public safety. These recommendations include:

- Allowing sentence modifications that can reduce populations within the jails, as outlined in Va. Code § 19.2-303.
- Diverting offenders from being admitted into jail prior to trial, including the use of summonses by law enforcement in lieu of arrest pursuant to Va. Code § 19.2-74, and use of local pretrial programs as available and with consideration to local capacity.
- Considering ways to reduce low-risk offenders that are being held without bail in jails.
- Utilizing alternative solutions to incarceration such as home electronic monitoring, pursuant to Va. Code § 53.1-131.2.

Motor Vehicle Inspections

Governor Northam has directed the Virginia Department of State Police to suspend the enforcement of Motor Vehicle Safety Inspections for 60 days.

For a comprehensive list of actions Governor Northam has announced to combat COVID-19 in Virginia, visit virginia.gov/coronavirus.

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