

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION UPDATE: WEEK 5

*FEBRUARY 7, 2025*

February 2025

Friends,

The House and Senate released their budgets this week. Check out our [Budget Sunday Update video](#) if you haven't already seen it. We've also included a summary below.

Next week, a small group of legislators from the House and Senate will begin negotiating a final, "conference" budget. We need to ensure that our remaining policy priorities are included in this budget. Register [here](#) if you would like to receive an action alert next week with instructions on how to advocate for these priorities.

Thank you!

## **Support VCCS Dental Hygiene Programs**

The House budget includes \$980,000 to support Virginia Community College System dental hygiene programs. Delegate Amy Laufer has championed this investment, which would help these programs recruit and retain dental hygiene clinical faculty.

## **Make a Plan to Preserve Coverage**

The Senate budget includes language that requires legislators to explore options to preserve Medicaid for the expansion population - acknowledging policy proposals circulating at the federal level that would drastically impact funding for Medicaid.

## **Expand School-Based Health Care**

The House and Senate budgets include language that will make it easier for schools to provide care via telehealth and mobile health clinics. These are promising steps, and we will continue to advocate for additional steps to accelerate the establishment of school-based health care programs across Virginia.

## Strengthen Support for Safety Net Clinics

The House and Senate budgets include additional funding to support safety net clinics, but not at the level requested. The House and Senate budgets include \$500,000 to support free clinics. The Senate budget includes \$500,000 to support federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), and the House budget includes \$1 million to support a non-emergency medical transportation pilot program for uninsured Virginians living in medically underserved or unserved areas in an FQHC's catchment area.

## Fund an Oral Health Loan Repayment & Design a Medicaid Benefit for Community Health Workers

Unfortunately, neither the House nor Senate budget included funding for an oral health loan repayment program or to design a Medicaid benefit for community health workers.

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