



Northern Virginia Regional Commission

December 6, 2018

Chairman
Hon. Laurie A. DiRocco
Vice Chairman
Hon. David Tarter
Treasurer
Hon. John C. Cook
Executive Director
Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor, District of Columbia
Executive Office of the Mayor
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

County of Arlington

County of Fairfax

County of Loudoun

County of Prince William

City of Alexandria

City of Fairfax

City of Falls Church

City of Manassas

City of Manassas Park

Town of Dumfries

Town of Herndon

Town of Leesburg

Town of Vienna

Dear Mayor Bowser,

We are writing to you to express our sincere and profound concern regarding a proposed action by the District of Columbia that will have a significant negative impact on the health outcomes of more than 2,000 residents of our region and Virginia who are served by the Ryan White Part A program as HIV/AIDS-affected individuals and families.

On Tuesday, November 27, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) was informed via telephone by Michael Kharfen, Senior Deputy Director of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD & Tuberculosis Administration (HASTA) of DC Health, that as of March 1, 2019 the City would be ending its 28-year agreement with NVRC to serve as the local regional administrator of the Ryan White Part A program for Northern Virginia.

The District, according to Mr. Kharfen, has determined it will serve as the sole administrator not only for the City and Northern Virginia, but for suburban Maryland and West Virginia as well. Mr. Kharfen gave no specific performance reason.

As you may know, Ryan White is one of a few federal programs that feature a regional service delivery area. In Metro Washington, the region for Ryan White Part A funds incorporate portions of three states – Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia -- as well as the District. When the Ryan White Part A program was created the statute indicated that the locality with the most cases of HIV at the time would receive funding on behalf of the entire Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA). Then and now in Metro Washington this is the District of Columbia.

The statute that created the Ryan White Program expressly determined that political subdivisions in the remaining portions of the Metro area would serve as administrators for their localities. NVRC – being a political subdivision of the Commonwealth within whose boundaries were found no less than 10% of the EMA’s cases – was chosen to administer services on behalf of Northern Virginia local governments. Recognizing the unique challenges of providing health care and supportive services to a multi-state, urban, suburban and rural service delivery area, we believe it is critically important to use expertise from all of the representative jurisdictions to guide program delivery for HIV/AIDS.

Now that DC has announced that as the federal recipient it will be the sole administrator, NVRC has the following concerns.

- With NVRC no longer involved in Ryan White Part A, what will be the administrative mechanism through which the viewpoints and needs of the local Virginia governments -- partners as identified in the statute -- can be articulated?
 - The HIV/AIDS population in Virginia is different from that of DC. Different strategies may be needed in reducing transmission within distinct HIV subpopulations.
 - Proactive work is necessary to build HIV infrastructure in areas, especially rural ones, where none currently exists. Availability and accessibility of needed services is a challenge in suburban Virginia, where the geographic landscape is substantially different from an urban environment. How will DC address these challenges?
- Virginia is implementing Medicaid expansion starting January 1, 2019. It is not reasonable to roll out a significant change in the successful service system for a highly vulnerable population at the exact same time when Virginia’s fledgling Medicaid expansion effort is initiated, raising many questions about linkage to coverage for newly-eligible HIV+ clients. As with any major system change, there will be unexpected impediments that make it critically important to have an entity on the Virginia side of the EMA like NVRC that can coalesce service providers to identify problems and communicate them to policy makers and legislators for remediation.
- DC Health’s own experience with implementing large scale changes to its Ryan White cost reimbursement and claims confirmation processes shows how disruptive these types of changes can be, and the significant amount of time and work involved to bring them to fruition. The results of introducing unit-based costs on the Virginia side of the EMA have been mixed, with one major Ryan White medical provider who serves more than half of suburban Virginia’s Ryan White clients unable to negotiate a contract.
- NVRC is also concerned about the lack of transparency related to the final expenditures for last year’s Part A program. This information is traditionally presented in a public forum.

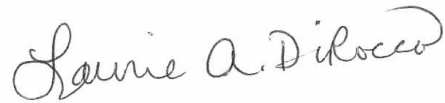
In the 28 years since the inception of this arrangement, NVRC has successfully administered this program on behalf of the more than 2.4 million residents of our region, providing and efficiently managing more than \$150 million in health care services to low-income, uninsured and under-insured Virginians with HIV/AIDS.

This leads to the basic question: Would the District of Columbia stand by and allow its suburban neighbors to determine who is best suited to serve the needs of its residents and integrate its service providing resources for the most vulnerable - and in some instances most ill residents? We think not.

Our request is simple; we ask your office to reaffirm NVRC as a party to Ryan White Part A in Metro Washington with an intergovernmental agreement and budget that articulates our responsibilities as well as DC's in the evolving Ryan White Part A program.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



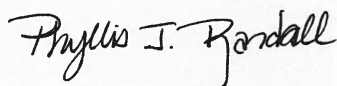
Laurie A. DiRocco
Chairman, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Mayor, Town of Vienna



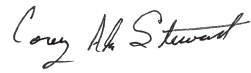
Sharon Bulova
Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



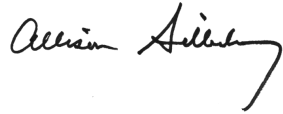
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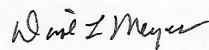
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Jeanette Rishell
Mayor
City of Manassas Park



Hal Parrish
Mayor
City of Manassas



David Tarter
Mayor
City of Falls Church



Derrick Wood
Mayor
Town of Dumfries

cc: Honorable Ralph S. Northam, Governor
Honorable Dr. Daniel Carey, Secretary of Health and Human Services
Honorable Dr. M. Norman Oliver, Commissioner of Health
Honorable Mark Warner, US Senator
Honorable Timothy Kaine, US Senator
Honorable Gerald Connolly, Member of Congress
Honorable Donald Beyer, Member of Congress
Honorable Rob Wittman, Member of Congress
Honorable Jennifer Wexton, Member of Congress – Elect
Honorable Abigail Spanberger, Member of Congress -Elect
Mr. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr., Executive Director, Northern Virginia
Regional Commission
Northern Virginia Chief Administrative Officers
Mr. Rashad Young, City Administrator
Mr. Michael Kharfen