**Medicaid expansion**

Unfortunately, the General Assembly voted to “expand” Medicaid coverage to provide health coverage to able-bodied adults. **I was steadfast in my opposition to this wrong-headed policy.** As of August 1, 2019, approximately 300,000 Virginians have signed up for the Medicaid “expansion” coverage. Virginia has yet to feel the full fiscal impact of this bad decision, but I am certain that very soon the funding required to keep up with the rising costs of Medicaid will be a significant strain on the state budget. I am also certain that the growing Medicaid strain on the Federal budget will require Congress to revisit their current level of support for the program in favor of passing along additional costs to Virginia. Additionally, a recent Federal Court decision has ruled “Obamacare” unconstitutional. If such a ruling is upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, the entire program may evaporate leaving Virginia in a precarious financial situation.

**“Certificate of Public Need” Reform**

Republicans are also leading the discussion on COPN reform. COPN reform would encourage competition among healthcare providers which would lead to an increase in access to care, reduced costs and promote innovation. For health care provider, including hospitals, to expand their services they need to go through a bureaucratic process and prove there is a “need” for their services. This is definitely far from free market principles. **I support reforming COPN.**

**State Budget**

I believe that providing resources for our most vulnerable citizens should be a priority. For this reason, I am happy to report that the 2019 State Budget (HB1700) provides the necessary funding for an additional **1,695 ID/DD Medicaid** waiver slots. This important amendment provides the largest increase in support for the intellectually and developmentally disabled since I have been in the House of Delegates! The budget includes $31.8 million for behavioral health services and includes longstanding, (the Hyde amendment), language that prohibits taxpayer funding of abortions.

**Coverage for Autism**

The General Assembly also expanded health care insurance coverage , (HB2577) for autism spectrum disorder by removing any age requirement. **I was a co-patron of this legislation, and voted “YEA”.**

**Telemedicine**

I am also happy to report that the General Assembly passed telemedicine legislation (HB1970) which requires insurers to provide coverage for “telemedicine” services to the extent they are available which will reduce the cost of providing healthcare. **I voted “YEA”.**