



Catastrophic
Illness
Commission

**2015
Annual Report**

**James “Tiger” Morton
Catastrophic Illness Commission**

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per West Virginia Code § 16-5Q-2



Since 2000 the James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission (Commission) has assisted over 1,000 citizens of West Virginia. The Commission acts as a last resort for those in dire need of assistance where the risk of death is imminent and no other resources exist.

The Commission makes direct payment to providers, through the WV Medicaid program, for individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid benefits, yet cannot afford to pay for various costs associated with catastrophic illnesses. Many West Virginians live just above poverty and cannot afford insurance, but are not eligible for state assistance benefits.

The Executive Director works with Medicaid and hospital charity care programs to determine if applicants are eligible for those programs first. Before receiving assistance from the Commission an eligible applicant must apply for and be denied coverage by Medicaid and investigate insurance coverage through the Marketplace Exchange program of the Affordable Care Act.

Assistance includes medical treatments and non-medical costs, such as travel for medical treatment and related costs. The Commission can assist each client with up to \$200,000 in medical services and \$5,000 in related transportation costs. Examples of covered expenses are:

- Proven and accepted medical procedures, such as surgery or chemotherapy;
- Medication that prevents rejection after a transplant and/or reoccurrence of a life threatening illness; or
- Lodging costs and transportation assistance to medical facilities for patients to receive the treatments or for related doctor appointments.

Along with financial assistance, the Commission has assisted 98 additional individuals in 2015 with referrals to other programs. These programs include Medicaid, American Cancer Society, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, various hospital financial counselors, local cancer assistance programs, Air Life Line, patient prescription drug and co-payment assistance programs and many others. By working with these partners and their available resources, the Commission is able to divert unnecessary costs for client assistance to those with resources available through their organizations.

The list below identifies by county the new number of West Virginians who received both in-kind assistance and financial assistance from the Commission in 2015. The numbers do not include people the Commission continues to assist from previous years.

County	Number	County	Number	County	Number
Harrison	4	Mingo	3	Taylor	2
Braxton	3	Barbour	1	Roane	2
Mineral	1	Jackson	2	Logan	2
Lewis	3	Monroe	1	Grant	1
Marshall	1	Randolph	3	Hardy	2
Fayette	3	Preston	1	Boone	3
Mercer	5	Nicholas	2	Raleigh	7
Greenbrier	6	Marion	6	Wayne	1
Cabell	4	Wirt	1	Berkeley	1
Monroe	1	McDowell	4	Unknown	4
Jefferson	2	Wood	4		
Kanawha	14	Putnam	2	TOTAL	106
Monongalia	2	Morgan	1		

For Fiscal Year 2015, general revenue funds in the amount of \$101,472.00 were allocated to the Commission by the West Virginia Legislature. As a 170(c) government entity for a public purpose, the Commission can accept tax-deductible contributions, gifts, property and grants from both private and corporate donors. Fundraising efforts began in 2015 with a direct mail campaign and grant submission. Educational presentations and other outreach efforts were provided to increase awareness and donor appreciation about the services the Commission provides to West Virginians with catastrophic illnesses.

The Commission's medical services claims are paid at the current Medicaid rate which greatly reduces the cost of those medical expenses. The claims are processed through Molina, the fiscal agent service contracted by the Bureau for Medical Services. Providers have one year to process claims, and two years for modifications. Molina paid approximately \$21,585.00 in medical services claims on behalf of the Commission in 2015. That amount does not include claims paid in December 2015 or the \$27,035.00 in additional claims that were sent back to providers for corrections.

A total of \$4,620.35 in 2015 was disbursed for lodging, meals and other related transportation costs through a client assistance state bank card and a grant account established through the United Way of Central West Virginia.

Examples of Commission assistance in 2015:

- ◆ 53-year-old female in need of cancer-removing surgeries until her insurance coverage went into effect,
- ◆ 56-year-old male needing chemotherapy until his insurance coverage went into effect,
- ◆ 56-year-old male requiring housing near the hospital after surgery after a lung transplant,
- ◆ 60-year-old female with multiple myeloma needing radiation and chemotherapy,
- ◆ 41-year-old male with melanoma needing lodging to receive treatments and for follow up doctor appointments,
- ◆ 63-year-old female with breast cancer needing fuel costs to travel for medical treatments and appointments, and
- ◆ 65-year-old female needing lodging for her and a caretaker near hospital while waiting for a pancreas transplant.

As of October 1, 2015, in an effort to assist with the reduction of costs and streamlining of efforts within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the Executive Director of the Commission also assumed the duties of the Interim Executive Director of the West Virginia Women’s Commission. Her salary is now being shared by both Commissions. Additional measures are being considered to further reduce costs.

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Jacques Williams, Attorney, Chairman, Monongalia County
Dr. Victoria Shuman, Physician, Greenbrier County
Sandra Cotton, Registered Nurse, Monongalia County
Francis Roberts-Buchanan, Social Worker, Cabell County
John Davidson, Member at Large, Kanawha County
Patricia Davis, Member at Large, Hampshire County
Nancy J. Sullivan, Assistant to Cabinet Secretary and
Staff Liaison to the Commission

For additional information, please contact:

Julie C. Palas
Executive Director
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
James “Tiger” Morton Catastrophic Illness Commission
State Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room 8-D
Charleston, WV 25305
Phone: 304-558-6073
Fax:304-558-6640
Email: Julie.C.Palas@wv.gov
Website: www.wvdhhr.org/cic



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