



MEDICAID FRAUD FOWL PLAY

West Virginians should be thankful for state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey this Thanksgiving because he has saved taxpayers lots of money. But, unfortunately, state lawmakers aren't allowing him to expand his reach.

Just how much did the AG's office save? Investigations in 2018 into waste, fraud, and abuse of the Social Security disability program saved taxpayers an estimated \$6.2 million. In the past three years, that number totals \$14.3 million.¹

AG Morrisey would like to tackle the fraud that occurs in Medicaid. However, this effort will be handled by the Department of Health and Human Resources. This is uncommon for other states who allow the AG's office to conduct anti-fraud investigations.

AG Morrisey is hoping lawmakers will grant his office authority because, as he said, "[r]ooting out fraud and waste in government remains a top priority."² He has tried to change the minds of lawmakers in the past, both in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, the bill died in the House of Delegates; in 2018, it died in committee.³

WV is a unique state when it comes to Medicaid because 29 percent of the state population relies on the federal program—the highest rate in the nation. WV also stands as one of the largest beneficiaries of improper Medicaid payments. In 2015, these improper payments costs taxpayers almost \$29 billion.⁴

These are large sums of money that taxpayers would save if this fraud was stopped by the right people. Instead, lawmakers seem more concerned with protecting DHHR's turf.

As AG Morrisey said, "We have a lot of expertise going after fraud...we're leaving tens of millions of dollars on the table that the state could benefit from."

Let's just hope lawmakers agree.

¹ West Virginia Record. "AG's office announces record-breaking yet for Disability Fraud Unit." January 22, 2019. Available at <https://wvrecord.com/stories/511739200-ag-s-office-announces-record-breaking-year-for-disability-fraud-unit>. Accessed January 27, 2019.

² Ibid.

³ West Virginia Legislature 2018 Session. Text of Senate Bill 5. Available at http://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB5%20INTR.htm&yr=2018&sesstype=RS&i=5. Accessed January 27, 2019.

⁴ The Intelligencer. Wheeling-News Register. "Cracking Down on Medicaid Fraud." January 18, 2019. Available at <http://www.theintelligencer.net/opinion/editorials/2019/01/cracking-down-on-medicaid-fraud-2/>. Accessed January 27, 2019.