



NANSEMOND INDIAN NATION SUES VIRGINIA FOR MEDICAID VIOLATIONS

Commonwealth Prioritizes Big Corporations Over Tribal Healthcare Providers

Norfolk, Virginia — April 2, 2025. The Nansemond Indian Nation and its Tribal health program, Fishing Point Healthcare, filed a federal [lawsuit](#) last night against the Commonwealth of Virginia and its agencies and high-level officials, including Governor Glenn Youngkin, alleging multiple violations of federal law. The suit accuses the Commonwealth of withholding Medicaid reimbursements and discriminating against Tribal healthcare providers to protect the financial interests of powerful Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) at the expense of low-income patients.

Fishing Point Healthcare was established in 2023 to serve underserved communities, following billing procedures approved by both federal and state agencies. But in October 2024, Virginia began refusing to reimburse Fishing Point for certain Medicaid services—pressuring the Tribal provider to transfer patients to MCOs, where they would receive lower-quality care.

“Virginia is undermining our sovereignty and our patients’ care to benefit healthcare giants,” said Nansemond Chief Keith Anderson. “We will not stand by.”

Virginia contracts with five MCOs, all owned by major health insurers. These companies limit care through cost-cutting measures that disproportionately affect vulnerable patients. Each MCO maintains an aggressive lobbying presence in the state capitol and receives substantial public funding.

A federal audit in November 2024 confirmed that Fishing Point billed correctly, its services are covered under Virginia’s Medicaid plan, and the Commonwealth has underpaid and illegally withheld reimbursement. Virginia’s Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) failed to share the audit results with the Nation and, five months later, is still refusing to comply with federal law and refusing to issue the required reimbursement.

In the meantime, Fishing Point has been self-financing care to ensure patients don’t go without. Despite no obligation to do so, it even offered to cover Virginia’s share of costs for non-Tribal Medicaid patients—an offer that would have saved the Commonwealth money. “We presented a cost-neutral plan for taxpayers,” said Fishing Point CEO Lance Johnson. “The state rejected it, showing this is about punishing Tribal care and protecting MCO profits.”

Instead, DMAS hired private law firm McGuireWoods—at taxpayer expense—to defend its actions.

Documents obtained by the Nation through FOIA show that DMAS knowingly misled legislators during the 2025 General Assembly, falsely claiming that federal law requires the state to route Tribal providers through MCOs. In fact, federal rules are designed to protect Tribal Health Programs, and Virginia’s current MCO contracts already include Tribal carve-outs.

The suit challenges a budget amendment endorsed by Governor Youngkin on March 24, which imposes new, unlawful restrictions on Tribal healthcare.

The Nation’s lawsuit asks the court to:

- Order Virginia to reimburse Fishing Point in full for underpaid and unpaid services;
- Block enforcement of the illegal budget amendment; and
- Require DMAS to cease its discriminatory practices.

“Fishing Point offers low-income patients a choice—and they’re choosing Tribal care,” said attorney Jessie Barrington of the law firm Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC, counsel for the Nation and Fishing Point. “That threatens insurers who profit from fewer choices and shocks state officials used to greasing the wheels for big insurance. But my clients know how David vs. Goliath ends.”

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Photos, courtesy of Fishing Point Healthcare

About the Nansemond Indian Nation

The Nansemond Indian Nation is a federally recognized Tribe based in southeastern Virginia. Recognized in 2018 under the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act, the Nation exercises its sovereignty to govern its people, territory, and enterprises. Since federal recognition, the Nation has invested in healthcare, cultural preservation, environmental restoration, and economic development—advancing self-determination while contributing to the broader Commonwealth. Through its work, the Nation models how Tribal sovereignty and state partnership can build a stronger, more equitable Virginia. Learn more at <https://nansemond.gov>.

About Fishing Point Healthcare, LLC

Fishing Point Healthcare was founded in 2023 by the Nansemond Indian Nation—whose name, “Nansemond,” means “Fishing Point” in the Algonquian language. The clinic delivers high-quality, culturally rooted healthcare to Medicaid enrollees and Tribal citizens across southeastern

Virginia. Blending modern medicine with traditional values, Fishing Point provides comprehensive services that prioritize compassion, integrity, and respect. The organization is committed to improving health outcomes in underserved communities and honoring the dignity of every patient. Learn more at <https://www.fishingpointhc.com>.

About Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC

Cultural Heritage Partners (“CHP”) is a mission-driven law firm: to leverage the power of history and culture to build a more just and inclusive future. With a global practice rooted in the belief that access to cultural heritage is a human right, CHP represents clients whose histories, identities, and rights are too often ignored or undervalued. Its team of attorneys, Tribal specialists, historians, archaeologists, and art experts defend Tribal sovereignty, protect important sites and traditions, and shape policy and precedent in courts, legislatures, and international bodies. Learn more at www.culturalheritagepartners.com.