TAKING ACTION FOR MEDICAID EXPANSION

ACTION TOOLKIT

WWW.HEALTHCAREFORFL.ORG
The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was designed as a door for Americans to access quality, affordable health care coverage through the Marketplace and expansion of state-operated Medicaid programs. The ACA offered Florida the opportunity to close the gap in access by raising the income threshold for Medicaid eligibility to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. At the time, Florida declined the opportunity to expand Medicaid, along with nineteen other states. The decision left over 800,000 Floridians without health coverage.

As a result, Florida’s Medicaid program remains one of the most restrictive in the country, rendering low income adults without children unable to access health care coverage. The Florida Policy Institute estimates that Medicaid Expansion would reduce the number of uninsured Floridians ages 19 to 64 by 29%. Medicaid Expansion would provide a lifeline to 1.2 million Floridians in this age range, which includes newly uninsured Floridians due to loss of employer-sponsored insurance as a result of COVID-19. Though the situation appears bleak, all hope is not lost because Medicaid Expansion is still a possibility for Florida.

**WHY IT MATTERS**

Making Medicaid expansion a reality in Florida will require a large and motivated base of supporters willing to speak out. You can help us reach more Floridians with the important message of health care by taking action. Encourage your friends, family, and other people in your networks to do the same!

**INSIDE THE GUIDE:**

- Contact Your Legislators
- Talk to Your Friends and Family
- Write a Letter to the Editor
- Share Your Health Care Story
- Host a Postcard Party
EMAIL OR TWEET

Use a pre-loaded email or edit to share why expanding access to health care is important to you.

SEND FLORIDA LEGISLATORS AN EMAIL/TWEET OR GO TO:
WWW.HEALTHCAREFORFL.ORG/ACTION

PHONE CALL

1. Dial 850-558-5575
2. Enter your ZIP Code
3. You'll be connected to the offices of the Governor and your local Representatives

FIND MORE TIPS AT
WWW.HEALTHCAREFORFL.ORG/ACTION

IN-PERSON MEETING

Our campaign will train you for meetings with your legislators in local offices and in Tallahassee.

SIGN UP AT:
WWW.HEALTHCAREFORFL.ORG/JOIN
"More and more we're avoiding conversations about important topics, especially with people we disagree with. The road less traveled — the better path — is to engage in conversation. So, how do we talk about politics in a healthy way? Here are some helpful tips:

- **Listen first** – People can sense when we are genuinely interested in what they have to say.
- **Be curious** – Genuine curiosity is contagious.
- **Name your highest values** – Naming your values to your conversation partner helps them understand you better, and invites them to speak about their values, too.
- **Call the common good to mind** – Identifies a shared starting point that we can build on.
- **Be patient — with yourself and others** – We are all human, so we won’t handle every conversation the right way, and we will still often awkwardly disagree with each other.

By: Patrick Schmadeke, The Grotto

### The Basics of Expansion

- Before COVID-19, nearly 900,000 uninsured Floridians would have gained access to health insurance through Medicaid expansion. Researchers now estimate that over 1 million Floridians would be covered, including those who have lost employment-based coverage due to COVID-19.
- Under the Affordable Care Act states can expand health insurance coverage to adults, including those without children, earning up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. This is up to $29,988 per year for a family of three.
- 90% of the cost of expansion would be covered by Florida’s federal tax dollars returning to the state and could provide significant relief for Florida’s state budget.
- Researchers project state general revenue savings in the range of $198.9 million annually to $385 million over a five-year period.
- Medicaid expansion protects the pocketbooks of hardworking Floridians. Health insurance premiums are 7 to 11% lower in expansion states vs non-expansion states.

### Why It Matters Now

- Failure to expand is having life and death consequences. Experts project that from 2014-2017, 2,776 older Floridians (aged 55-64) died prematurely due to the state’s failure to expand Medicaid.
- Medicaid coverage allows workers to stay healthy, to keep jobs and look for work. Preserving the lives of workers is essential to keeping the economy running.
- Gaps in health insurance coverage among racial and ethnic groups narrowed the most in states that expanded Medicaid.

**FLORIDA’S OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND MEDICAID**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible for Medicaid</th>
<th>Qualifies for Marketplace Subsidies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults without Children with income below $12,767</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Caretakers $6,925 – $21,720*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities $11,472 – $12,760</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*FOR FAMILY OF 3

**ACTION TOOLKIT – HEALTH CARE FOR FLORIDA**
IT’S HARD TO QUALIFY FOR MEDICAID IN FLORIDA, EVEN IF YOU’RE LOW-INCOME. In Florida, to be eligible for Medicaid you must be a parent with dependent children and earn no more than 31% of the Federal Poverty Level, $6,924 a year for a family of three.

MEDICAID EXPANSION HELPS TO KEEP RURAL HOSPITALS OPEN. Since 2019, 3 rural hospitals in Florida have closed: Regional General Hospital, Williston; Shands Starke Regional Medical Center, Starke (Now emergency only); Shands Live Oak Regional Medical Center, Live Oak (Now emergency only)

MEDICAID HELPS WOMEN STAY HEALTHY BEFORE AND AFTER PREGNANCY. While Medicaid pays for nearly half of all births and must cover pregnant women through 60 days postpartum, after that period, women in Florida lose coverage. Many women are left without a pathway to coverage and become uninsured during a medically vulnerable phase of their lives.

**MYTHS**

**MYTH: “FLORIDA’S MEDICAID PROGRAM IS CONSUMING THE STATE BUDGET”** The lion’s share of the 2020-21 $39.2 billion Health and Human Services (HHS) budget is allocated to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), responsible for administering the Medicaid program. However, more than 70% of AHCA’s budget is comprised of federal funding.

**MYTH: “COVERAGE THROUGH MEDICAID RESULTS IN POORER HEALTH OUTCOMES”** Because of Medicaid’s eligibility criteria and the strong correlation between poverty and poor health and disability, Medicaid beneficiaries are poorer and have a poorer health profile compared to the privately insured.

**MYTH: “MEDICAID ENCOURAGES PEOPLE NOT TO WORK”** Most adult Florida Medicaid enrollees (aged 19–64) are already working. Those who don’t work are primarily people with illnesses or disabilities, students, or caretakers for a family member.

**WIN SOMEONE OVER?**

Remember to ask your audience to join the coalition by visiting [www.healthcareforfl.org/join](http://www.healthcareforfl.org/join) or texting MEDEX4FL to 52886

This sample hooks to a story about the local or statewide COVID-19 case rate. It assumes a flat case count, but it could be tweaked easily for a dropping one or (more likely) a rising one.

The most effective letters include a personal story or experience. Here are some examples:

- I don’t have health insurance and it’s a scary place to be. A simple dental cavity easily turns into a bigger problem that lands you in the ER. With no money, it’s impossible.
- My job does not offer health insurance, and I do not make enough money to qualify for tax subsidies that would make health insurance affordable through the Marketplace.
- I’m an essential worker in our community and we need support now more than ever. Many of us are working tirelessly without access to health insurance coverage, yet we’re putting ourselves at risk daily.
RECORDING A SELFIE VIDEO

WHY RECORD A VIDEO ABOUT MEDICAID?

- Raise public awareness and education around the positive impact Medicaid Expansion will have on Floridians
- Communicate to your elected officials, community leaders, friends and family that Medicaid funding is critical to the health and well-being of those they serve
- Highlight a unique perspective on the benefits of Medicaid Expansion

You may choose to record a video of yourself (video selfie) to share on social media. Video allows you to share your personal story.

BEFORE YOU START, CONSIDER:

LAYOUT
- Facebook and Instagram stories are usually recorded Vertically
- YouTube Videos or Computer Monitor – Landscape or Horizontal
- Remember, the layout can’t be changed after you start filming.

LIGHTING
- The MOST important element in recording
- Make sure the light source (ring light, window, natural sunlight) is facing you.
- This is typically an easy fix. If your face is dark in the image the light source is probably behind you. Turn around and that should fix your image.

LENGTH
- The optimal length of a video for Facebook and Instagram is 30 to 60 seconds. With YouTube you can make the video a little longer, but your introduction must be intriguing.
- It may be helpful to write out your selfie talk, depending on how specific and detailed you plan to be in the video.

LOOK
- Generally, people are still fidgeting with their camera when their video first starts. Your audience will pick up on that!
- Smile before the video starts. Start with the look you will have throughout video
- Make sure you are looking at the camera on your phone/laptop. Your inclination will be to look at yourself or your screen.
- Hold the camera a little above your eyeline to record.
SHARE YOUR HEALTH CARE STORY

TIME TO RECORD

Make sure the area you are using is free of background noise. If you’re recording outside, be cautious of areas with birds chirping, traffic, people talking, etc. If inside, make sure you check for ambient noises like a ticking clock, laundry, dishwasher, music, etc.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Consider using the video to urge lawmakers to Expand Medicaid.

“Hi. My name is Jane Smith. I’m a community advocate [student, mother, father, resident, etc.] in Pasco County. I believe that all Floridians should have access to health care coverage. I urge the Governor and Florida Legislature to expand the Medicaid program.”

“Hi. My name is Jane Smith and I’m living without health insurance coverage in Pasco County. Every day I struggle with my asthma and worry about how I’m going to pay for the medications I need. If Florida expands the Medicaid program I will have access to the health care I need to get stronger and healthier. Governor DeSantis, I urge you to expand the Medicaid program for Floridians like me.”

SUBMISSION

Once you have recorded your video, upload it to the Florida Voices for Health Facebook or Instagram page. You can also email the video to us at info@healthyfla.org. Be sure to include your name and email address.

IT IS TIME FOR EXPANSION, FLORIDA!
WHAT IS A POSTCARD PARTY?

A postcard party is a way to get together with friends (socially distanced, or on zoom of course!) and write cards to either elected representatives or selected voters. Handwritten, personalized postcards get more attention, and are a lot of fun to make. This is a quintessential grassroots activity and has really taken off in the last few years. There are many groups and individuals generating handwritten cards all over the county about various issues. You will be surprised at how many cards a small group can generate.

HOW DO I HOST A POSTCARD PARTY?

As a host, you supply addresses and a few sample messages that your guests can use as inspiration (we can provide you with these if you like). The cards can be as elaborate or as simple as you want. Some people like to just use a pen, and some have an arsenal of stickers, markers and other art supplies. Any approach is good, and feel free to have your kids join in too!

To request postcards email at flvoices@healthyfla.org with name, address, organization/affiliation and number of postcards.

TO WHOM SHOULD I SEND THE POSTCARDS?

Writing to elected officials to let them know how important Medicaid expansion is to you is an excellent first start. When you run out of representatives to contact, contact us. We can get you set up with voters to contact, and we will never run out of these names, so if you are on roll, keep going!

#MedEx4FL