

# Access to Healthcare: Healthy Families for Florida's Future

2014 United Way Position

*Florida's United Ways urge the 2014 Florida Legislature to provide access to affordable healthcare for all Floridians.*

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## **BACKGROUND:**

Access to affordable healthcare is an essential building block to a productive life. Ensuring people have the opportunity to achieve optimal health is core to United Way's mission and community focus.

Florida is the third highest state in percentage of uninsured with more than 3.7 million residents without health insurance. Expanding access to affordable health care to Floridians will improve workplace productivity and stimulate the economy.

Most uninsured Floridians are unable to afford preventive care. They are forced to use emergency rooms for primary care, usually when health issues are at their worst, thus driving up the overall cost of healthcare, which is then passed on to those already insured and to Florida businesses providing health insurance for their employees.

Increasing access to affordable healthcare for all Floridians will provide for a healthier and more productive workforce, and prevent Florida businesses from paying a hidden tax in increased costs for healthcare coverage.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES:**

- EXPAND access to affordable comprehensive healthcare coverage for all Florida residents.
- REMOVE the KidCare five year waiting eligibility requirement for children of legal immigrants.
- EXTEND presumptive eligibility to uninsured children applying for KidCare.
- INCREASE access to dental care for children and low income households.
- MAXIMIZE funding for behavioral health services for all Florida residents.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

- According to the Florida Hospital Association, the cost of uncompensated care for over 3.7 million uninsured children and adults was over \$6 billion in 2012. The cost for uncompensated care is passed on to taxpayers, consumers and health insurance providers, creating a hidden tax to Florida businesses in the form of increased health insurance rates.
- Removing the KidCare five year waiting period for children of legal immigrants will extend coverage to over 20,000 children. The estimated cost to the state in providing coverage for these children is \$17.6 million, and Florida would in turn draw down \$43.1 million in Federal dollars to fund Florida's KidCare program.
- Other states that have extended presumptive eligibility have only seen a 1 percent error rate. The cost to the state is minimal as it will be reimbursed at regular federal Medicaid matching rate for covering children during the presumptive eligibility period, even if they are not ultimately found eligible for health coverage.

For additional information, please contact  
The United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.

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