Expanding Healthcare Coverage

Heart of Florida United Way urges the 2015 Florida Legislature to use available federal funds to extend healthcare coverage to more than 1 million Floridians.

BACKGROUND

Good health is fundamental to a child’s ability to succeed in school and to adults’ ability to provide for their families, contribute to society, and live a full life. Ensuring people have the opportunity to achieve optimal health is core to United Way’s mission and community focus.

Florida has the 3rd highest uninsured rate in the United States. Over one million Floridians are without basic health coverage because they make too much to qualify for Medicaid and too little to afford coverage through the Health Exchanges. Expanding health insurance coverage to Floridians with incomes between 100 percent and 138 percent of the federal poverty level will provide access to basic health coverage for over thousands of working families.

Federal Healthcare Coverage Expansion Funds: Under healthcare reform legislation, the Federal Government is covering 100 percent of health coverage expansion costs for the first three years, with that percentage gradually declining until states begin covering 10 percent in 2020 and beyond. Participating in some form of expansion would bring up to $52 billion in federal dollars to Florida over the next decade, while the state would be required to spend $2.4 billion. Combined, those funds would provide healthcare coverage to more than 1 million Floridians.

Why the Florida Legislature has not accepted the Federal Funds: Those who oppose accepting the federal expansion dollars contend that it will cost the state money, the Federal Government might renge on its funding promise, and cost projections may be inaccurate.

Benefits of using the Federal Funds: Other states have successfully implemented alternative public/private partnerships using the federal expansion dollars to extend healthcare coverage for families. Federal expansion dollars will have direct and indirect impacts to grow Florida’s state and local economies over the next decade. According to a study from the Florida Hospital Association, federal expansion dollars will provide up to $115 billion growth in healthcare industry revenues, $72 billion growth in GDP, $52 billion growth in labor income associated with 121,000 new jobs, and $4.2 billion growth in business tax revenues.

PROPOSED CHANGE

Extend healthcare coverage to more than 1 million Floridians: Heart of Florida United Way supports creation of an alternative plan that draws down federal healthcare coverage expansion dollars to provide health coverage for eligible Florida residents.

For additional information, please contact the Heart of Florida United Way at: (407) 835-0921.