



# HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

## HEALTH COVERAGE FOR FLORIDA'S WORKING FAMILIES

March 15, 2013

To meet the needs of Florida's working families and small businesses and to help grow Florida's economy, House Democratic Caucus leaders call for bipartisan legislative action this session to expand health coverage to another 1 million adults and families in Florida.

House Democratic leaders believe that expanded health coverage is a smart use of available state and federal resources and is a good financial deal for Florida's taxpayers. Expanded health coverage will create thousands of new jobs and generate billions of dollars in additional revenues for Floridians.

"There are major opportunities to expand health coverage for working Floridians, and we cannot afford to wait when it comes to saving lives," said House Democratic Leader Perry Thurston. "An expansion of health coverage will create high-paying jobs, be good for Florida's economy, and will improve health outcomes for hundreds of thousands of Floridians."

### **Democratic Caucus members believe that Florida's health plan should:**

- **Guarantee health coverage** for all Floridians under age 65 who have incomes at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level. For an individual, that's an income of up to \$15,400; and for a family of three, it's earnings of \$26,300 a year.
- **Provide coverage to childless adults** who meet the income criteria.

- **Extend meaningful, quality coverage by accepting all available federal funds.** Under the Affordable Care Act, state analysts estimate that Florida would receive up to \$55 billion in federal money over the first 10 years of the plan while expending about \$3 billion in state funds. For the first three years, the federal government would pick up the full cost of the expanded health coverage. After that, the federal share reduces slowly to 90 percent in 2020 and beyond.
- **Assure access** to the same types and levels of services as required by federal law.
- **Continue cost-sharing limitations** that already apply to the state's Medicaid program in recognition that Floridians at, below or just above the poverty line already make difficult choices to meet basic needs. Tolerable cost-sharing restrictions include nominal copayments for individuals earning above the poverty level though not so great as to block or discourage their access to necessary care, especially life-saving services.
- **Take all necessary precautions to avoid a two-tiered system of health care** in Florida and instead develop a plan that focuses foremost on the needs of patients with an emphasis on strong consumer protections.

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