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# Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford Announces "Florida Health Choices Plus" to Provide More Floridians with Quality Health Care Options

**Tallahassee, FL** – Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford today announced "Florida Health Choices Plus," a policy approach to provide more Floridians with quality health care options.

"The Florida House has developed a plan that will fit the needs of Florida, not the requirements of Washington," said Speaker Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel). "Our plan increases our commitment to a strong safety net and ensures Floridians are not on the hook for billions that we currently do not have."

"Florida Health Choices Plus" strengthens the safety net by providing an estimated 115,000 uninsured Floridians with coverage. The plan allows eligible adults living in poverty to fill the coverage gap created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), including parents and certain adults with disabilities, and receive access to health care at the lowest possible cost. The proposal will cost the state \$237 million annually and does not rely on federal dollars to operate.

For more information, please read the Florida House Majority Office's overview of "Florida Health Choices Plus" online: <a href="https://bit.ly/FHCPlus">bit.ly/FHCPlus</a>. To view the bill online, please click here.

"By utilizing the forces of the free market, we are providing low-income Floridians with quality options that are sustainable and will not be funded by additional federal dollars," said Chair Corcoran. "This plan provides meaningful health care options to those who need it most without risking Florida's financial future."

"Florida Health Choices Plus" was developed based on the following principles:

- 1. Reject the federal government's "all or nothing" plan.
- 2. Embrace a free market solution.
- 3. Strengthen the safety net.

- 4. Ensure the integrity of our existing healthcare system.
- 5. Protect taxpayers by only considering plans that are sustainable.

In March, the Florida House Select Committee voted against Medicaid expansion, which will cost the state of Florida \$3.5 billion over the next 10 years. Speaker Weatherford has made strengthening Florida's safety net a priority, as reflected in the House's proposed FY 2013-14 Budget. The budget increases funding to serve our most vulnerable populations such as our elderly, disabled and citizens in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment. It includes \$996.3 million for Medicaid Price Level and Caseload increases and fully funds the anticipated growth of Kidcare. It also allocates \$24.2 million to increase those served on the Agency for persons with Disabilities Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Waiver by approximately 750 individuals.

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# Florida Health Choices Plus Program Summary

Issue	Bill Action
Eligible People	<ol> <li>Uninsured parents and caretaker relatives of children under age 18 with a household income under 100% of the federal poverty level are eligible for the program.         <ul> <li>100% of poverty is \$23,550 for a family of four</li> <li>Most of the children of these parents are already covered by Medicaid or KidCare.</li> <li>Florida has about 147,000 uninsured parents under 100% of poverty. Based on our estimates for Medicaid expansion, we expect about 115,000 will sign up for subsidized coverage, if it is available.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Disabled people on federal Social Security Income assistance under 100% of the federal poverty level not already eligible for Medicaid are eligible for the program.         <ul> <li>Medicaid currently covers SSI disabled people up to 74% of the poverty level.</li> <li>This group is on Medicare as a result of their SSI status, and would use additional coverage for wrap-around services and Medicare cost-sharing.</li> <li>Based on our estimates for Medicaid expansion, we expect about 310 people will sign up for subsidized coverage, if it is available.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Financing and Personal Responsibility	<ul> <li>The state will make a contribution of about \$167 monthly (\$2,000 annually) per enrollee.</li> <li>Assuming all projected parent and disabled enrollees sign up, and including administrative expenses, the state contribution will cost about \$237 million annually.</li> <li>Each enrollee must make an individual contribution of \$25 monthly.</li> <li>Additional contributions are allowed: <ul> <li>Enrollees may make additional contributions to increase their buying power.</li> <li>Employers and charitable organizations may also make contributions on behalf of enrollees.</li> </ul> </li> <li>To promote movement out of poverty, non-disabled enrollees must meet work requirements consistent with those in the federal cash assistance and food stamps programs. About half of the expected parent enrollees are in one of these programs now, so must already meet those requirements.</li> </ul>
Purchasing Mechanism	Enrollees will use the state contribution plus their own contributions to purchase health coverage and services through the Florida Health Choices website. Choice counseling will be available to assist enrollees understand coverage and service options.  Any remaining funds will go to individual health savings accounts established by Florida Health Choices, and may be used for to cover other health-related expenditures (like over-the-counter medication and cost-sharing). Unused funds will be refunded to the contributor upon disenrollment.

Enrollees may purchase any coverage product available through Florida Health Choices,
but must purchase preventive and hospital coverage or services. Products available can
include:

- Health insurance policies
- Health maintenance contracts
- Limited benefit plans
- Prepaid clinic services
- Service contracts
- Bundled services packages (arrangements with providers for purchase of specific amounts and types of health services and treatments)
- Short-term policies

# Products and Services