



## Florida's United Ways urge the 2016 Florida Legislature to expand access to affordable health care for all Floridians

### BACKGROUND:

Last year, Florida's United Ways released a report documenting the true scope of financial hardship for Florida's ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families. The following policy recommendations for the 2016 Florida Legislative Session are drawn from the ALICE Report and from the work of nonprofit, business, and government leaders.

Access to affordable healthcare is a critical need for working families, and fundamental to children's ability to succeed in school. Ensuring that people have the opportunity to access healthcare, achieve optimal health and live healthfully are core to United Way's mission and community focus.

**Access to Affordable Care:** Florida KidCare is the state's health insurance program for uninsured children in low to moderate income families. Children insured through KidCare are more likely to receive preventive care and less likely to use more expensive emergency room visits (and hospital charity funds) for primary care. Removing the five-year waiting period for children of lawfully residing immigrants will extend coverage to an additional 22,000 children in Florida, at an estimated cost to the state of \$1.1 million.

Florida's fastest growing demographic group is seniors over 65. As our population ages Florida must maximize funding for home- and community-based services, such as 'Community Care for the Elderly', to provide support for older adults and reduce the cost burden for Florida families as well as taxpayers.

New technologies such as 'telehealth' increase access and reduce healthcare costs in rural or under-served areas affected by a shortage of physicians and healthcare professionals.

**Expanded Health Coverage:** Nearly 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. Extending health insurance to Floridians in the 'coverage gap' will provide access to affordable healthcare for thousands of working families. Coverage expansion contributes to economic growth and reduces the hidden tax of higher insurance rates.

### PROPOSED CHANGES:

**APPROPRIATE \$1.1 million in state funds to eliminate the KidCare five-year waiting eligibility requirement for lawfully residing immigrant children.**

**MAXIMIZE home-and community-based services for older adults to reduce nursing home costs.**

**REMOVE barriers to technologies that reduce costs and increase access to healthcare.**

**ADOPT a bipartisan 'Florida plan' to expand health coverage for uninsured Floridians.**

### CAUGHT IN THE COVERAGE GAP

Florida has the second highest uninsured rate in the United States.

For additional information, please contact  
**Ted Granger, United Way of Florida, 850-488-8276**  
**Dave Wallace, United Way of Broward County, 954-453-3760**

