



FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT

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Florida Health Justice Project Statement on House Passage of Build Back Better Bill *BBB Offers Healthcare Coverage to an Additional 415,000 Floridians and Other Critical Gains*

(Miami, Florida – November 19, 2021) – The Build Back Better (BBB) Act passed this morning by the U.S. House of Representatives will bring access to affordable health care to over 400,000 Floridians who have been caught in the “coverage gap” – earning too little to receive health insurance subsidies, but too much to qualify for the state’s Medicaid program.

“Access to affordable health care shouldn’t depend on where you live. Floridians have suffered far too long under state leadership that has irrationally refused to expand Medicaid,” said Alison Yager, executive director of Florida Health Justice Project. “Build Back Better finally offers a path to affordable health coverage that will provide life-saving care and medications to low income workers, parents and those with chronic conditions.”

Florida is one of just 12 states that have refused to expand Medicaid, limiting the program to the strictest of eligibility criteria, blocking too low-income older adults and those with chronic health conditions from accessing affordable health care coverage.

The positive impacts of BBB will be almost immediate, with more than 2 million uninsured adults in the coverage gap – 415,000 in Florida – able to enroll in Affordable Care Act marketplace plans without paying any monthly premiums.

Florida Health Justice Project has been a leader in the fight for expanding Medicaid in Florida, and is a proud member of the [Health Care for Florida](#) coalition. Through our [STORIES!](#) work, FHJP elevates the voices of those living in the coverage gap.
(<https://www.floridahealthstories.org/medicaid-expansion>)

“Health care is a human right, ” said Yager. “This legislation is critical to righting historic wrongs, and is a step toward ensuring the health of *all* residents of our state.”

BBB also begins to address the critical funding shortages for home and community-based services (HCBS) through significant investments that will help increase pay for front-line workers and decrease waiting lists for the programs providing an alternative to nursing home care. "Home-based care allows individuals to live independently, age in dignity in the comfort of their own homes, surrounded by friends and family instead of isolated in institutions," said Miriam Hartz, Founder and Director of Advocacy. "Isn't that what we all want and deserve at the end of our lives?"

The Covid-19 pandemic provides a stark example of the adverse impacts by institutionalization. As of March 2021, almost 11,000 Florida nursing home residents died due to COVID.

FHJP has been a leader in advocating for improvements to HCBS, [educating](#) senior advocates, sharing [the stories](#) of those who depend on HCBS, and spearheading a major [sign-on letter](#) urging Congress to support HCBS.

Other health care benefits offered under BBB include:

- Low or no-cost premiums and lower deductibles and copays for ACA health care plans. Beginning in 2022, ACA plans will have lower deductibles and reduced charges for out-of-pocket costs. Low-paid workers with employer-sponsored insurance that have high deductibles and copays that are a barrier to coverage will also have the opportunity to purchase ACA plans that are more affordable.
- Year-round open enrollment, similar to Medicaid.
- An extension of Medicaid [postpartum benefits](#) to a full year.
- Continuous coverage for kids on Medicaid and CHIP, regardless of income fluctuations, to ensure continuity of care, and a permanent extension of CHIP funding for states.

ABOUT [FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT](#)

Florida Health Justice Project engages in comprehensive advocacy to expand health care access and promote health equity for vulnerable Floridians.
