



# FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT

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## **Florida Health Justice Project: Expand Medicaid in Florida *COVID-19 Pandemic Exposes Disparity, Deficiencies In Health Care System***

Miami, Florida, March 6, 2020 – In light of community spread of COVID-19, Florida Health Justice Project (FHJP) calls on the Florida legislature to expand Medicaid and invest in public health safety net programs.

Florida is one of just 14 states that have not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Florida's refusal to take federal tax dollars to cover low-income adults under age 65 is undoubtedly linked to our status as the state with the fourth highest rate of uninsured individuals (13%). This has left 400,000 working poor residents without a path to health insurance.

"Medicaid expansion is a nonpartisan issue. So is disease," said Miriam Harmatz, executive director of FHJP. "The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the vulnerability of a health system where a significant portion of the population is uninsured. How many more Floridians will suffer and die unnecessarily because they can't afford testing and treatment? How many more Floridians will be exposed to this deadly pathogen because their uninsured neighbors and family members have foregone testing and treatment?"

Among the Floridians who would benefit from expanding Medicaid: low-income parents, parents and adults without children and low-income pregnant women. Since Americans primarily receive health insurance through their employers, individuals in financial distress from having lost their jobs – and health insurance – would benefit. If Florida were to expand Medicaid, it could reduce the number of uninsured residents by nearly one third.

COVID-19, and future pandemics, may well hasten the rate of illness and death rate of the uninsured, which cannot afford to access testing and treatment. Seniors ages 60 and up, who comprise over one-quarter of the population, are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 virus, with more complications and higher death rates. Between 2014 and 2017, almost 3,000 older Floridians died prematurely because of the state's failure to expand its Medicaid program.

The impact of pandemics such as COVID-19 extends beyond the uninsured as individuals, those who are unable to afford testing and treatment may unknowingly risk

infecting others. (Cognizant of the risks that come with healthcare cost barriers in the face of a pandemic, New York and Washington have taken the lead by requiring insurers to waive the costs associated with COVID-19 testing.)

Underfunded public hospitals, federally qualified health centers, emergency rooms, and scant charity care constitute the woefully inadequate health care safety net in Florida. Long lines, long waiting periods for appointments, and substandard care are often the reality. Instead of robustly supporting health care programs, Florida legislators continue to slash the state's Medicaid budget, taking away coverage from Floridians who struggle to make ends meet and leaving them stuck without access to affordable health care coverage.

Expanding Medicaid would give health insurance to residents now in the "coverage gap," including working parents. These are Floridians who have income below the federal poverty level – too low to qualify for tax credits under the ACA but too high to be eligible for Medicaid. In order to qualify for Medicaid in Florida, a family of three must earn just \$6,825 or less per year. Adults without dependent children in Florida are unable to qualify for Medicaid benefits at any income.

The Florida Health Justice "Stories" project documents the struggles and challenges of living with illness or injury – and no path to adequate health care or health insurance – in order to educate Florida officials on the need to expand Medicaid. <https://www.floridahealthstories.org/>

"Unfortunately, it has taken a health crisis to shine a light on the needs of vulnerable Floridians, including children and seniors," said Alison Yager, FHJP's director of Policy Advocacy. "This is the moment to expand Medicaid and invest in a robust public health care system. In doing so, we can save lives and chip away at long-standing health inequities."

#### **RESOURCES AND HEALTH CARE INFORMATION:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The Florida Department of Health has opened a COVID-19 Call Center at 1-866-779-6121 and dedicated website: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/index.html>

The Florida Department of Health website has a county-by-county list of public health clinics that offer free or low-cost healthcare services. <http://floridahealth.gov/all-county-locations.html>

Federally qualified community health centers in Miami-Dade County that provide free or low-cost health care. <http://miamidade.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health-centers/index.html>

*Florida Health Justice Project recognizes that access to quality and affordable health care is a human right and engages in comprehensive advocacy to expand healthcare access and promote health equity for vulnerable Floridians through advocacy,*

*storytelling, outreach, education and technical assistance and support.*  
[www.floridahealthjustice.org](http://www.floridahealthjustice.org)

## **Florida Department of Health: Community Health Centers**

Main Number  
305-324-2400

[miamidade@flhealth.gov](mailto:miamidade@flhealth.gov)

Primary care is the day-to-day healthcare given by a health care provider. Typically this provider acts as the first contact and principal point of continuing care for patients within a healthcare system, and coordinates other specialist care that the patient may need. Primary care includes health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings (e.g., office, inpatient, critical care, long-term care, home care, day care, etc.).

### **Community Health Centers in Miami-Dade County**

#### **NORTHEAST**

##### **Drop-In Education & Access Center**

681 NE 125th St., N Miami, FL 33161  
(786) 476-1005

##### **Borinquen Health Center – North Miami**

708 NE 125th St., N Miami, FL 33161  
(786) 433-8815

##### **Borinquen Health Center - Women's Center**

12603 NE 7th Ave., N Miami, FL 33161  
(305) 576-6611

##### **Carrie Meek - Villa Patricia Towers**

7801 NE 125th St., Miami, FL 33161  
(786) 235-7020

##### **Case Management Center**

3550 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 508, Miami, FL 33137  
(305) 576-6611

##### **Borinquen Health Center**

100 NE 38th St., Suite 5, Miami, FL 33137  
(305) 576-1599 or (305) 576-1675

##### **Borinquen Health Center**

3601 Federal Highway, Miami, FL 33137  
(305) 576-6611

#### **NORTHWEST**

##### **Borinquen Medical Centers of Flagler**

5040 NW 7th St., Suite 170, Miami, FL 33126

##### **Jessie Trice Community Health**

5361 NW 22 Ave., Miami, FL 33142  
(305) 637-6400

##### **Jessie Trice Community Health**

##### **Flamingo Medical Center**

901 E. 10 Ave, Bay 39, Miami, FL 33030  
(305) 887-0004

##### **Citrus Health Network**

##### **Primary Health Care Center**

4125 W. 20 Ave., Hialeah, FL 33012  
(305) 424-3120

#### **SOUTH**

##### **Homeless Assistance Health Center**

28205 SW 125th Ave., Homestead, FL 33039  
(305) 416-7156

##### **CHI Martin Luther King, Jr.**

##### **Clínica Campesina**

810 W Mowry St., Miami, FL 33030  
(305) 248-4334

**Good Shepard Health Center  
Greer Building**  
336 NW 5th St., Miami, FL 33128-1616  
(305) 577-4840

**Camillus Health Concern, Inc.**  
336 NW 5th St., Miami, FL 33128  
(305) 577-4840 and (305) 374-1065

**Dr. Rafael A. Penalver Clinic**  
971 NW 2nd St., Miami, FL 33128  
(305) 325-3450

**Jefferson Reaves Senior Health Center**  
1009 NW 5th Ave.,  
Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 585-6000

**Camillus Health Clinic**  
1545 NW 7th Ave., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 577-4840

**Mother Teresa Sister of Charity**  
724 NW 17th St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 577-4840

**North Dade Health Center**  
16555 NW 25th Ave., M. Gardens FL 33054  
(786) 466-1500

**St. John Bosco Clinic**  
730 NW 34th St., Miami, FL 33127  
(305) 635-1335

**Jessie Trice Center for Community Health  
Norland Family Health Center**  
18360 NW 7 Ave., Miami, FL 33169  
(305) 650-9551

**Jessie Trice Center for Community Health  
James E. Scott Center**  
7200 NW 22 Ave., Miami, FL 33142  
(305) 835-8122

**Jessie Trice Center for Community Health  
Jefferson Reaves Women's Residential**  
2985 NW 54 St., Miami, FL 33142  
(305) 637-6498

**Families-R-Us Care Center**  
8000 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL 33138  
(305) 759-4778

**Borinquen Health Center – West Dade**  
10528 SW 8th St., Miami, FL 33174  
(305) 552-1201

**CHI Doris Ison Center**  
10300 SW 216 St., Miami, FL 33190  
(305) 253-5100 ext.277

**CHI Everglades Health Center**  
19300 SW 376 St., FL City, FL 33034  
(305) 246-4607

**CHI Naranja Community Health Center**  
13805 SW 264 St., Miami, FL 33032  
(305) 258-1207

**CHI South Dade Center**  
13600 SW 312 St., Homestead, FL 33033  
(305) 242-6069

**CHI West Perrine Center**  
9970 SW 178th St., Miami FL 33147  
(305) 252-4487

**Good News Care Center**  
101 S Redland Rd., FL City, FL 33034  
(305) 246 2844

**Homestead Community Based  
Outpatient Clinic**  
950 Krome Ave. # 401, Homestead, FL 33030  
(305) 248-0874

**Open Door Health Center**  
1350 SW 4 St., Homestead FL 33030  
(305) 246-2400

**Rosie Lee Wesley Health Center**  
6601 SW 62nd Ave., Miami, FL 33143  
(786) 466-6900

## **BEACHES**

**Jackson North Specialty and Diagnostic Center**  
100 NW 170th St., North Miami Beach, FL 33169  
(305) 654-6850

**Prevention Education & Treatment Center**  
615 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33139  
(305) 535-5540

**Homeless Assistant Center**

Chapman Center  
1550 N Miami Ave., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 329-3000

**Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Center**

720 SW 8 St., Miami, FL 33130  
(305) 858-0887

**Miami Beach Community Health Center**

12340 NE 6 Ct., N. Miami, FL 33161  
(305) 538-8835

**Jackson Memorial Hospital**

Ambulatory Care Center  
1611 NW 9 Ave., Miami FL 33136  
(305) 585-6000

**Miami Beach Community Health**

Stanley C. Myers Center  
710 Alton Rd., Miami Beach, FL 33139  
(305) 538-8835

**Miami Beach Community Health**

Beverly Press Center  
1221 71 St., Miami Beach, FL 33140  
(305) 538-8835

**Miami Beach Community Health**

Center for Haitian Studies  
8260 NE 2 Ave., Miami, FL 33138  
(305) 757-9555

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