



Florida Health Justice Project and the Older Adult Advocacy Task Force of the United Way Miami Support Legislation That Invests in Home and Community-Based Services for Seniors and the Disabled.

Miami-Dade County Has 16,000 Seniors on Waitlist Who Could Benefit

For Immediate Release
September 28, 2021

Contact: Miriam Harmatz, Esq., Advocacy
Director and Founder Florida Health Justice Project; (786)-853-9385;
harmatz@floridahealthjustice.org

MIAMI (Sept. 28, 2021) – [Florida Health Justice Project \(FHJP\)](#) and The Older Adult Advocacy Taskforce, facilitated by United Way Miami, have been educating local Congressional leaders regarding the need for increased funding for Medicaid’s home and community-based services (HCBS) program for people with disabilities and older adults. The proposed \$400 billion in the [Better Care Better Jobs Act \(BCBJA\)](#) could provide Florida, and Miami-Dade County in particular, with essential funds to offer quality home healthcare for people who require significant assistance with the basic activities of daily living.

Funding for the BCBJA is being considered by Congress as part of the reconciliation bill, expected to be voted on later this week.

Florida is currently ranked 51st on the AARP’s scorecard for long-term services and support. Meanwhile, 20% of the population is aged 65 or over, and the growth rate for our senior population is among the highest in the country.

Currently, over 60,000 older adults in Florida are on the waitlist for HCBS services through the Long-Term Care (LTC) program. The situation is particularly dire in Miami-Dade County, with almost 16,000 residents on the LTC waitlist, representing nearly a quarter of those statewide. The need for Medicaid HCBS is projected to grow by 30% over the next 10 years in Miami-Dade.

In a recent [brief](#), FHJP outlined the benefits the Better Care Better Jobs Act, currently being considered as part of the next Congressional spending bill, including:

- Strengthening and expanding the HCBS workforce by addressing insufficient payment rates and ensuring that increases are passed on to direct care workers
- Increasing access to behavioral health services and coordinating with employment, housing and transportation supports
- Providing consumer protections by requiring an Ombudsman program

COVID-19 has only increased the need for more home-based healthcare, as the nearly 11,000 deaths among nursing home residents provides a stark example of the adverse health outcomes risked by institutionalization.

###

Read the [long-term care stories](https://www.floridahealthstories.org/long-term-care) of real Floridians.
<https://www.floridahealthstories.org/long-term-care>

ABOUT THE [FLORIDA HEALTH JUSTICE PROJECT](#)

The [Florida Health Justice Project](#) seeks to improve access to affordable health care for Floridians, with a focus on vulnerable low-income populations. FHJP expands the advocacy community's capacity to resolve individual access issues and educate consumers; identify and address systemic barriers to healthcare; and protect Medicaid and other safety-net programs.

ABOUT [UNITED WAY MIAMI](#)

United Way Miami is a driving force in the community, successfully responding to emerging needs and transforming people's lives. Since 1924, we have worked together with our network of donors, volunteers, and partners, to generate and amplify resources, and advocate for policies that improve the quality of life for all. We leverage our unique role as convener, strategic funder, service provider, awareness builder, and influencer so that everyone in Miami-Dade has access to quality education and the opportunity to lead healthy and financially secure lives -- the building blocks of a thriving community.

ABOUT THE OLDER ADULT ADVOCACY TASKFORCE

The Older Adult Advocacy Taskforce is a collaboration of more than twenty experts, thought leaders, and advocates in the aging sector in Miami-Dade County. Facilitated by United Way Miami since 2015, the purpose is to explore policy solutions for aging and growing unmet needs among older adults (age 60 and older) in Miami-Dade County. The taskforce strives to raise community awareness and to educate, and serve as a resource to, elected and community leaders.