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## **Florida Health Justice Project Applauds Biden Administration's Actions Regarding COVID-19 Medicaid Protections**

### ***Extending Public Health Emergency Assures Safety Net Protections in Healthcare for Floridians***

(Miami, FL) -- The Biden Administration's Acting Health and Human Services Secretary Norris Cochran recently sent a [letter to state Governors](#) stating that the Public Health Emergency (PHE) "will likely remain in place for the entirety of 2021," all but assuring that needy Floridians insured by Medicaid will maintain their health coverage in the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This is welcome news for Florida's Medicaid beneficiaries as well as for the state budget," said FHJP's Executive Director, Miriam Harmatz. "Assuring access to affordable health care will help families survive both the economic downturn and health crisis."

The Covid-19 pandemic has substantially increased the number of Floridians relying on [Florida's health care safety-net programs](#). The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration [reported this week](#) that since mid-March 2020, the state's Medicaid program has added over 795,000 recipients, representing a 21.3% increase.

"The PHE extension protects Medicaid enrollees by providing continuous coverage at a time when families are facing economic pressures and health threats," added Alison Yager, J.D., FHJP's Deputy Executive Director.

While the PHE is in effect, Florida Medicaid receives a 6.2% increase in federal funding, which means that the federal government now pays approximately 67% of the cost of coverage for every Floridian enrolled in Medicaid. In return for accepting this increased federal funding, states provide beneficiaries with certain protections, including a moratorium on terminations for the duration of the PHE, Harmatz said.

“In a state that has not [expanded Medicaid](#) coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), being able to maintain one’s coverage during the health emergency is vital,” Harmatz explained. More than 4.5 million low-income Floridians are currently covered by Medicaid.

[Postpartum women](#) are one of the groups who have seen important gains as a result of the current moratorium on terminations. Under Florida's Medicaid program, women who become eligible for Medicaid because of their pregnancy lose this coverage two months after giving birth, unless the woman’s monthly income is at or below \$459 (32% of the Federal Poverty Level - FPL). However, with the PHE’s continuous coverage, these new mothers have been able to remain on Medicaid during the crisis. This extension of coverage is good for maternal and infant health.

Additional resources:

[Biden Administration Promises Predictability on Future Extensions of the Public Health Emergency](#)

[Medicaid Expansion in Florida Will Generate Approximately \\$ 7 Billion for the Economy](#)

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### **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.

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