



PRESS RELEASE

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Report: Florida Forgoes *Billions* in Federal Funds Needed to Stimulate Devastated State Economy By Not Expanding Medicaid

Expansion Could Give 1.5 million Florida Residents Access to Health Benefits

(MIAMI, FLORIDA) --Florida would generate billions of dollars in economic activity and help fill the state's looming budget shortfall if state lawmakers adopt Medicaid expansion, according to a new report issued by the Florida Health Justice Project (FHJP). Florida is one of 12 states that have not expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

The FHJP Report, "Medicaid Expansion as Economic Stimulus," by Matt Childers, PhD, FHJP's Director of Research and Policy, concludes Medicaid expansion would:

- Bring in \$4.29 billion in new federal spending, with the federal government picking up 90 percent of costs for new Medicaid enrollees.
- Produce up to \$7.3 billion in economic activity, with Miami-Dade and Broward Counties receiving one-fourth of that economic benefit.
- Give affordable health care coverage to more than 1.5 million Florida residents.

"Expanding Medicaid now is smart public health policy and smart economics," said Dr. Childers. "Now is the moment, considering the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the economy, state finances, and the precarious health of Floridians."

Pandemic-related job loss has increased the number of uninsured Floridians eligible for Medicaid expansion to over 1.5 million. Nearly one-fourth of these residents reside in South Florida. Meanwhile, state leaders are warning of "deep" budget cuts as they wrangle with a financial crisis.

“Medicaid expansion not only saves taxpayers money, it creates a huge economic stimulus,” said Scott Darius, executive director of Florida Voices for Health. “The fiscally prudent move is to use the new federal dollars to offset spending on other priorities. At a time Florida is facing a record [\\$5.4 billion budget shortfall](#) and unable to continue paying unemployment benefits, this is money we can’t afford to say no to.”

Florida could save up to \$901.2 million over five years in health care costs, according to a 2019 [Leavitt Partners study](#). The [Florida Policy Institute](#) estimates Florida would save \$199 million in the 2022-2023 fiscal year alone.

South Florida, which is the epicenter of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), with the highest number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths, would reap the most economic benefits, according to the report. The influx of new federal dollars covering the cost of health care coverage would boost economic activity in a region suffering significant job losses.

“State policymakers’ piecemeal approach to health care hasn’t worked. Amid the pandemic, it’s crucial now more than ever that Floridians have access to affordable health care services,” said Sadaf Knight, CEO of Florida Policy Institute. “In addition to the immense benefit to residents it would bring, Medicaid expansion would provide a much-needed boost to state and local economies.”

[Florida Health Justice Project](#) is part of the [Health Care for Florida](#) coalition of Florida health care advocates, which include [Florida Voices for Health](#), [Florida Policy Institute](#), and [1199SEIU](#), focused on building a learning community of partner organizations in support of expanding Medicaid to adults with low incomes.

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Link to “Medicaid Expansion as Economic Stimulus, September 2020”
<https://www.floridahealthjustice.org/publications--media/medicaid-expansion-as-economic-stimulus-impact-on-floridas-economy>