



For Immediate Release

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[VIDEO: Florida Decides Healthcare Press Conference Launching Ballot Initiative to Expand Medicaid in Florida](#)

TALLAHASSEE, FL — Florida Decides Healthcare announced the official launch of petition circulation efforts to place Medicaid expansion on the 2026 ballot in a virtual press conference held earlier today. Campaign Manager Jake Flaherty, along with policy experts and impacted individuals, highlighted the urgent need for Medicaid expansion, which aims to provide over 1.4 million Floridians with essential healthcare.

A full video of the press conference can be found here: <https://fb.watch/pXLSaZ2aPg/>

Jake Flaherty opened the conference, stressing, "The effort to bring Medicaid expansion to Florida has been a long journey... With more than 1.4 million Floridians missing out on essential care, the push to get this policy across the finish line has never been greater."

Holly Bullard, from the Florida Policy Institute, emphasized the economic benefits: "Medicaid expansion would save the state funds... bringing back five billion dollars more in reimbursement and funding for Medicaid, but it just has this multiplying effect in the economy and will create thousands of jobs."

Acadia Jacob from Florida Voices for Health underlined the growing need for access to care: "The need for care has really only grown in Florida... The fact that Florida Decides Healthcare is launching now isn't what makes this moment the most urgent for closing the coverage gap. The reason we're still here is that the need for care has really only grown in Florida. It's impacted so many more Floridians. There are those thousands of us who through the public health emergency unwind, who lost access to health coverage they relied on for years. And it's important to remember here in Florida, really one only qualifies if you have a dependent child for Medicaid, there's no help for single adults regardless of how little you make. But essentially you do have to be in the bottom third of poverty... If you earn between \$10,000 and \$30,000 a year, you likely fall into the healthcare coverage gap."

Dr. David Woolsey shared from his experiences as an emergency room physician: "To understand what this means from the patient's point of view, it's really important to understand the difference between emergency care... versus comprehensive care which is what these 1.4

million Floridians would gain with access to Medicaid... And when we bring Medicaid expansion to Florida, we can change all those outcomes and change the lives of these 1.4 million Floridians.”

Marquis Moore, a Floridian without health coverage due to the state’s lack of expansion, shared his insights, emphasizing the broader benefits of Medicaid expansion: “And I know that with this [Medicaid expansion]...it will be better for each and every household. Especially for that mother or that single father, that brother who's taking care of the siblings.”

Alison Holmes, a mother to an adult child with disabilities, spoke poignantly about the dire consequences of living without health coverage in Florida: "Living without health coverage is terrifying, especially as a caregiver. The physical and emotional toll it takes, knowing that preventable conditions could lead to dire outcomes, is overwhelming. It's not just about me; it's about providing for those who rely on us the most."

Echoing his mother's sentiments, **JJ Holmes** added, "To be honest, I just don't understand why my mom can't get healthcare. Every day, I try as hard as I can to make it easier for her when she lifts me, but I know I'm hurting her and don't know what to do. I wish people could see how hard her life is and see how much pain she's in. If they did, they'd understand how important this is. It's my birthday today, and the best gift I could get is for Florida to expand Medicaid."

The conference concluded with a call to action for all Floridians to support the petition drive, as **Jake Flaherty** highlighted: "Today is the start of a concerted effort... We have the opportunity to provide healthcare coverage for 1.4 million of our friends and neighbors."

For more information, visit floridadecideshealthcare.org.