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**Senator Tina Polsky and Representative Katherine Waldron
File "Food is Medicine" Bill**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – "The first wealth is health" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). **Senator Tina Polsky (D-Boca Raton) and Representative Katherine Waldron (D-Wellington)** filed [Senate Bill 188](#) and [House Bill 173](#), which seeks to help improve the health of Medicaid patients through improved eating habits and this will result in their decreased reliance on Florida's health system.

This legislation defines Food Is Medicine programs and calls for the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health, to establish and fund the Food Is Medicine Program in Florida. This will provide Florida Medicaid coverage for qualified people, to purchase and have delivered prescribed healthful foods in disease-specific protocols. The program will include medically tailored groceries, medically tailored meals, and produce prescriptions to meet the specific needs of Medicaid recipients who have or who are at risk of a diet-related disease or condition and who are either high-need patients or patients with high-cost patient care or who have the highest health care utilization. The program will track the impact of healthful foods on the health outcomes of these Medicaid recipients and the cost-effectiveness of such evidence-based practices. This is a new federal program and all funding will come from the federal government. Several states have passed similar legislation and are already showing positive returns, such as fewer emergency room visits, as well as an improved quality of life and mental health for recipients.

"We need to utilize every tool we have to help combat disease and take advantage of federal funds offered like the Food is Medicine program to help benefit Floridians," said **Senator Polsky**.

"With \$1 of every \$3 spent in Florida going to health care, we must enact responsible cost-cutting treatments for Medicaid patients while positively impacting their health. The Food Is Medicine programs, which have been shown to benefit health outcomes

and prevent devastating and high cost disease effects downstream is one such mechanism," said **Representative Waldron**. This bill will give Medicaid patients the opportunity to control their diet-related chronic illnesses, and while also decreasing medical costs due to fewer Emergency Room visits, long term stays, and surgeries.

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