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MEDIA ADVISORY

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State Legislators Join Advocates in Call to Address Florida's High Uninsured Rate

***Health care coverage remains a major concern for
Floridians in post-pandemic reality***

Tallahassee, FL-As Florida recovers from the pandemic, health care remains unaffordable for working, but low-income, Floridians. Nearly 800,000 uninsured Floridians are in the "coverage gap" meaning they earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little for tax credits in the marketplace. Despite the opportunity to cover more people at a savings to the state, leaders continue to reject Medicaid expansion. In response, legislators, advocates, and impacted Floridians will gather to renew our call for access to affordable health care.

WHO: Speakers include –

- Florida State **Senator Annette Taddeo (D- Miami)**
- Florida State **Representative Felicia Robinson (D- Miami Gardens)**
- Florida State **Representative Geraldine Thompson (D- Windermere)**
- **Alison Holmes**, Orange County resident

WHAT: Press conference hosted by the [Health Care for Florida coalition](#)

WHEN: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 9:00 am

WHERE and RSVP: The Florida Capitol, 4th Floor in front of the Senate Chamber. [Register here to watch online.](#)

The press conference will be attended by **Senator Taddeo** and **Representative Felicia** Robinson who filed companion bills (**SJR 412 and HJR 239**). The joint resolutions, if passed, will allow Floridians to decide for themselves at the ballot box if Medicaid expansion is right for them:

“While the governor plays politics by refusing to expand Medicaid, Floridians are paying the price with a “hidden sick tax” of \$2,000 for every hospital stay to cover the cost of the uninsured.” said **Senator Annette Taddeo**.

“I believe that the core of Medicaid Expansion is to provide essential health coverage within reach for individuals who would otherwise be unable to access it,” said **Representative Robinson**. “I support the expansion of Medicaid as it is the fiscally responsible thing to do. It increases financial security and creates opportunities for economic mobility that is beneficial to the state of Florida.”

In addition, **Senator Taddeo** will be joined by **Representative Thompson** who filed companion bills (**SB 1504 and HB 27**). If passed, these bills aim to expand Medicaid eligibility in Florida.

“By expanding Medicaid eligibility, we are providing much needed healthcare to those that need it most”, said Senator Taddeo. “The less uninsured individuals we have, the better our State will be for it. It’s unfathomable for individuals with diabetes, for example, to risk bankruptcy over much needed insulin just because it’s incredibly unaffordable.”

“Many workers who earn low incomes lost their health coverage when they were furloughed, or lost their jobs during the pandemic”, said **Representative Thompson**. “If we expanded Medicaid, many of these workers would have been able to get the health care that they need and to be able to access primary care, rather than ending up in our emergency rooms. So it is important, based on our experience during the pandemic, that we expand Medicaid”.

This includes Floridians like **Alison** and **JJ Holmes** from Orange County, who will attend the press conference to share their experiences. With debilitating back and hip problems, Alison provides 24hr care for her son JJ, whose disabilities do not allow him to walk, talk, sit or feed himself. Alison is in the coverage gap and terrified her own health could fail before JJ gets off the Medicaid waitlist. The Holmes family has been waiting for these services for more than 14 years.

Medicaid expansion would save the state an [estimated \\$200 million](#) a year and the American Rescue Plan would send [an additional \\$3 billion to Florida](#). Instead of taking this deal or debating the issue, the Florida House and Senate continue to leave low-income Floridians with no options for care.

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