

Lower Costs, Better Care for Floridians

There is an urgent need to lower health costs, expand coverage, and reduce racial health disparities across Florida. That is why it is essential to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation, specifically empowering Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, creating a federal solution to close the Medicaid coverage gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing, and making the premium reductions included in the American Rescue Plan permanent, so Floridians can continue to access low-cost coverage.

Americans support bold action to lower health costs and curb soaring drug prices, with [88 percent](#) in favor of allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical corporations to lower prices. President Biden is committed to tackling these issues head on, demonstrated by his commitment to expanding health coverage through [enhanced subsidies](#), closing the [Medicaid coverage gap](#), and [support](#) for Medicare drug price negotiation.

Floridians depend on affordable health care, expanded access to coverage, and drug pricing reform to live healthy lives. Empowering the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices would save Americans more than [\\$150 billion](#) at the pharmacy counter and create an additional [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government that could be reinvested to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the Medicaid coverage gap in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#). We must act now.

The American Rescue Plan Has Helped 2,120,350 Floridians Access Affordable Care

- **Strong Marketplace Enrollment.** Over [two million](#) Florida residents have signed up for coverage through the Marketplace in 2021.
- **Increasing Health Coverage Access For Thousands of Floridians.** The American Rescue Plan has [reduced or eliminated](#) Marketplace premiums for thousands in Florida. Under the plan, [318,500](#) uninsured Floridians are newly eligible for health coverage tax credits and 270,600 individuals have access to coverage with zero dollar premiums.
- **Meaningful Savings On Premiums.** Premium savings under the American Rescue Plan benefit all Americans. For example, a 60-year-old couple with an annual income of \$75,000 will see their monthly premiums drop from \$1,941, to just \$531, saving more than [\\$1,410](#) each month.
- **Improving Maternal Health Access.** For new mothers, the American Rescue Plan has created a pathway to coverage, providing states the opportunity to extend [postpartum coverage](#) under Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months following birth. Florida has enacted legislation to seek [expansion](#). In 2017, [57 percent](#) of Florida births were covered by Medicaid.

Lowering Prescription Drug Costs

- **Drug Price Hikes Are Outpacing Inflation.** In 2019, American prescription drug spending soared to [\\$369.7 billion](#), an increase of 5.7 percent, more than [three times](#) the inflation rate for the same period.
- **One Quarter Of Americans Struggle To Access Essential Medications.** [Nearly one in four](#) Americans taking prescription drugs struggles to afford needed medications, with 29 percent reporting not taking medications as instructed within the past year due to cost.
- **Drug Price Negotiation Would Save Billions.** The single most effective measure to bring down drug costs is to empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Negotiation would save patients more than [\\$150 billion](#) and create [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government.
- **Reinvestment Of Savings.** When the federal government saves on drug costs, those funds become available to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the [Medicaid coverage gap](#) in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#).
- **Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Is Overwhelming Popular.** [Nearly nine in ten](#) Americans support empowering Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

Drug Prices In Florida

- In 2019, Floridians spent [over \\$650 million](#) in cash on prescription drugs.
- A 2019 AARP poll found [nearly 60 percent](#) of older Floridians are concerned about the cost of prescription drugs.
- According to research from West Health in 2018, [34 percent](#) of Floridians reported that they couldn't pay for a medication that their doctor prescribed.
- Floridians overwhelmingly support allowing Medicare to negotiate better drug prices. A 2018 poll from West Health found that [87 percent](#) of Florida voters were more likely to vote for candidates who support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

Medicaid Expansion And Closing The Coverage Gap

- **Medicaid Expansion Would Give Health Care Access To Over 1 Million Floridians.** Pre-pandemic estimates from the Urban Institute found that [1,312,000 Floridians](#) would enroll in Medicaid if the state adopted expansion, including more than [400,000](#) individuals caught in the coverage gap. Nearly [6 in 10](#) Floridians who stand to gain coverage under expansion are people of color.

- **Over 130,000 Jobs Would Be Created By Medicaid Expansion In Florida.** Medicaid expansion in Florida would add [134,700](#) jobs to the Florida economy, with 61,600 jobs added to the health care industry alone.
- **Medicaid Expansion Saves Lives.** Between 2014 and 2017, Florida's rejection of Medicaid expansion cost an estimated [2,800](#) lives. According to the Florida Policy Institute, there are [674 excessive deaths](#) among older adults 55 to 64 every year as a result of the state's decision to reject expansion.

Expanding Coverage

- **Millions Nationwide Would Gain Stable Coverage.** [4.2 million](#) uninsured people would gain coverage if the American Rescue Plan's subsidies are made permanent, and millions more would continue to save on health care costs.
- **Permanent Health Coverage Subsidies Would Benefit Older Floridians.** Over two million Floridians selected a plan on the Marketplace in 2021, with older adults between [55 and 64](#) making up more than a quarter of enrollees. The American Rescue Plan offers [significant relief](#) for older individuals, including those at 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

Expanding Medicare Benefits

- **More than 2,000,000 Floridians Would Benefit From Expanded Coverage.** Nearly [38 million](#) traditional Medicare enrollees would gain dental, vision, and hearing coverage if Medicare benefits were expanded. Due to lack of coverage, [nearly half](#) of Medicare beneficiaries did not seek dental care in the past year.
- **Medicare Beneficiaries Are 21 Percent Of Florida's Residents.** In 2018, more than [one in five](#) Floridians were Medicare beneficiaries. Recent reports have found between [47](#) and [64](#) percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have dental coverage, [74 percent](#) lack vision coverage, and [76 percent](#) go without hearing coverage.
- **Income And Racial Inequity Increase Health Disparities.** Half of all Medicare beneficiaries live on annual incomes below [\\$29,650](#), pushing dental, vision, and hearing coverage out of reach. For [beneficiaries of color](#) or those living in [rural](#) areas, accessing these essential benefits has become increasingly challenging.

Representatives Val Demings, Charlie Crist, And Darren Soto Are Standing Up For Floridians' Care

Representatives Demings, Crist, and Soto Supported Providing Relief For Florida Families With The American Rescue Plan. Demings, Crist, and Soto all [voted for](#) the American Rescue Plan, which includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for thousands of families across Florida. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families. Demings [praised](#) the bill, saying, "The American Rescue Plan is the most significant emergency

relief legislation in American history. Our plan will save countless lives and put money into the pockets of people who need it most. I am proud to be a part of this transformative effort to save our country from COVID-19.”

Representatives Demings, Crist, and Soto Voted For Historic Legislation To Lower Prescription Drug Prices. Demings, Crist, and Soto all voted for the 2019 Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act ([H.R. 3](#)), historic legislation to drastically reduce Americans’ prescription drug prices by up to 55 percent and save taxpayers nearly \$500 billion over the next 10 years. H.R. 3 included the most comprehensive drug pricing reform in American history and the largest expansion to Medicare’s benefits in decades. Crist [praised](#) the bill, saying “For too long, Americans have been squeezed by high drug prices, while drug companies make record profits... But with passage of the Elijah Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, a new day is dawning, one in which the playing field is leveled, and the buying power of the American people is brought to bear on the pharmaceutical industry, resulting in lower prices for all.

Senator Marco Rubio And Governor Ron DeSantis Are Part Of The Problem

Rubio Opposed The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Floridians

Senator Rubio Voted Against The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Thousands Of Florida Families. Alongside all of his Republican colleagues, Marco Rubio [voted against](#) the American Rescue Plan, historic legislation that includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for Florida families. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families.

Rubio Has Received Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars In Pharmaceutical Contributions

Senator Rubio Has Received Over \$800,000 In Contributions From Pharmaceutical Companies And Executives. Over the course of his career, Marco Rubio has received \$860,969 in [contributions](#) from pharmaceutical PACs and executives. During his 2016 reelection campaign, more than \$215,000 in contributions poured in from the pharmaceutical industry.

DeSantis Refuses To Expand Medicaid In Florida

Governor DeSantis And Republican State Lawmakers Strongly Oppose Medicaid Expansion. Under the American Rescue Plan, even after paying for the cost of Medicaid expansion, Florida would receive an additional [\\$1.8 billion](#) in federal funding to expand coverage. Medicaid expansion would improve health care access for communities of color, which account for [57 percent](#) of uninsured Floridians. DeSantis and GOP state lawmakers vehemently oppose Medicaid expansion in Florida, despite new financial incentives.