December 7, 2022

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We, the undersigned, call upon the state of Florida to help ensure an orderly approach to the end of the federal public health emergency (PHE). Recovery from the pandemic has been due in significant part to Floridians maintaining health coverage for themselves and their children.

We are united in asking for a published plan — like those, for example, released by North Carolina, Utah, and Oklahoma — to ensure that qualified Floridians maintain their Medicaid coverage and those whose circumstances have changed are assisted in finding alternative coverage. We ask this on behalf of Floridians enrolled in Medicaid, especially the 1.7 million people who have enrolled since the pandemic began in March 2020 and never gone through redetermination. Over 525,000 of these people are children aged 0-18. We need a robust state plan to ensure that eligibility can be correctly determined for every person on Medicaid and assistance is given to those who are no longer eligible so they can enroll in Marketplace plans or KidCare. Even with an extensive state outreach plan, thousands of Floridians will fall into the “coverage gap” at the end of PHE unwinding and need to be connected with local safety net resources.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recommends that states take up to 12 months to return to pre-pandemic operations for Medicaid renewals. This time would allow for Florida to ensure that eligible beneficiaries maintain coverage and have seamless transitions to other forms of coverage if they no longer qualify for Medicaid. Having a plan in place would:

- Afford Florida’s Department of Children and Families critical time to hire and train the staff needed to manage the more than 5 million redeterminations;
- Provide a roadmap for a multimedia, multimodal, and multilingual outreach and education campaign as other states have done (see, e.g. toolkit from Illinois on updating addresses);
- Provide needed time for recipient outreach to assist them in redetermination or support to seek alternate means of insuring themselves and their families;
- Help avoid unnecessary coverage losses for eligible individuals who have moved since the pandemic and have not updated their contact information;
• Minimize potential loss of coverage of eligible individuals due to the high administrative burdens of redetermination; and
• Ensure continued receipt of the funding (FMAP) increase under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which has saved the state nearly $2 billion since the start of the PHE.

The undersigned organizations stand ready to help develop a plan and create and disseminate informational materials to Medicaid recipients statewide.

Sincerely,

Florida Policy Institute
Florida Health Justice Project
Allegany Franciscan Ministries
Black Health Commission
Catalyst Miami
Center for Psychological Growth
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Community Foundation of Collier County
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Disability Rights Florida
Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.
Florida Council of Churches
Florida Covering Kids & Families
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
Florida Philanthropic Network
Florida Psychological Association
Florida’s Children First
Haitian Neighborhood Center, Sant La Inc.
Health Foundation of South Florida
Hispanic Unity of Florida
Institute for LGBT Health and Wellbeing
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid
League of Women Voters of Florida
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Palm Health Foundation
Pastors for Florida Children
PFLAG South Miami
Power U Center for Social Change
Progress Florida Education Institute
St. Johns County Legal Aid
Tampa Bay Abortion Fund
The Mental Health Association of Central Florida
Together for Hope
UnidosNow, Inc.
United Activision Media LLC  
Winter Park Health Foundation  
Women’s Resource Center of Manatee  
Women’s March Florida  

CC: Secretary Shevaun Harris, Department of Children and Families  
Secretary Simone Marstiller, Agency for Health Care Administration  
Senator Kathleen Passidomo, Senate President  
Representative Paul Renner, Speaker of the House