

## Health care access

### BACKGROUND:

Access to healthcare is a critical need for working families and fundamental for children's academic success. Yet, Florida continues to have one of the highest uninsured rates in the nation. Nearly 380,000 Florida children still do not have health care coverage. Florida ranks at the bottom of states in the percentage of low-income children getting preventive dental care. While home and community-based care benefits seniors and costs far less than nursing home care, too many Florida seniors remain on wait lists for these important services.

### Expand Access to Children's Oral Health

A child's oral health affects learning, play and healthy eating. Dental disease is the most common childhood disease, affecting five times as many children as asthma. Children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school and four times more likely to perform poorly when compared to their healthy counterparts. Additionally, parents miss on average 2.5 days from work per year due to their children's dental problems. However, many low-income children in Florida do not receive any dental care. Florida's low Medicaid reimbursement rate, just 37 percent of the standard rate for private insurance, severely limits the number of dentists serving this population. To increase educational success, reduce health care costs, and improve the short and long term quality of life and productivity of Florida's children and future workforce, funding and legislation are needed to expand access to dental services for children.

### Expand KidCare Outreach

Currently 378,000 Florida children do not have health care coverage, and most are eligible for Florida's KidCare insurance program. Children's access to preventative healthcare keeps them in school and supports their academic success. Additional state funding is needed to expand outreach and enrollment.

### Expand Home and Community Based Services for the Elderly

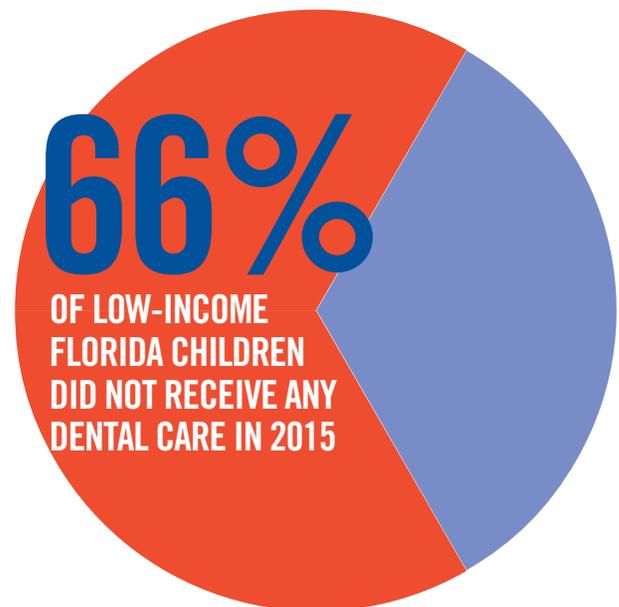
Florida's fastest growing demographic group is seniors over 65. Home and community-based services, such as Community Care for the Elderly, provide support for frail older adults and reduce the cost burden for Florida families as well as taxpayers. The average monthly cost to care for a senior in the CCE Program is \$605 compared to \$2,277 per month (state share of cost) for nursing home care. Over 55,000 seniors statewide are on waitlists for home care support services, including Alzheimer's Respite Care.

### PROPOSED CHANGES:

**SUPPORT** legislation to expand access to dental care for children.

**RESTORE** funding for KidCare outreach and enrollment to reduce the number of uninsured children in Florida

**MAXIMIZE** funding for home and community-based services to provide support for older adults and reduce the cost burden for Florida families and taxpayers.



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2015)