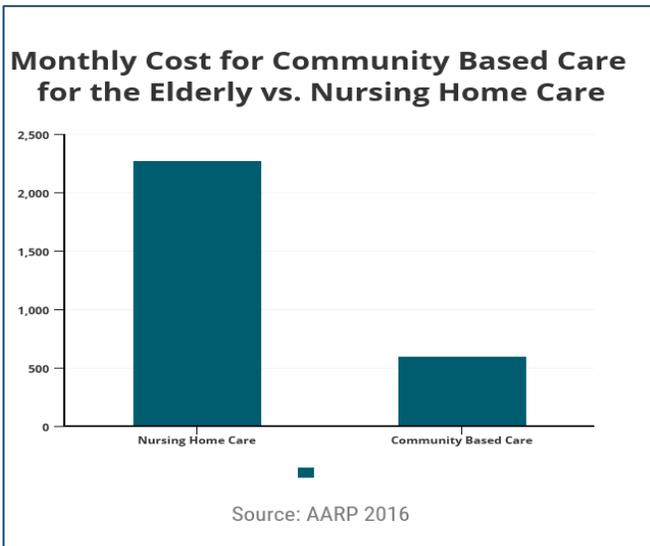
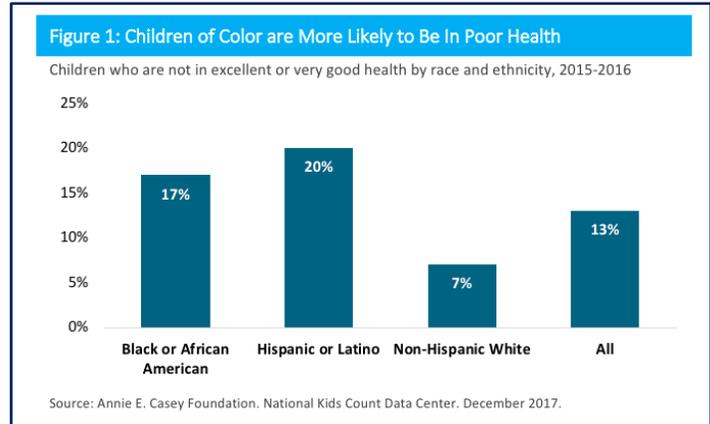


# Ensuring Access to Healthcare



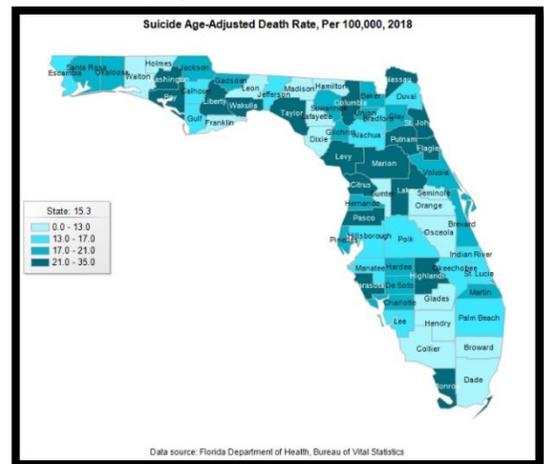
## Healthcare in Schools

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. Based on U.S. Census Bureau data, an estimated 6% of Florida’s children are also uninsured—a significant drop from the 13% rate in 2010, however still too high. Children without health insurance are less likely to have routine medical checkups, leading to more severe health problems. A recent federal policy change allows for school districts to draw down funds to pay for school-based health services for all Medicaid-eligible children. Schools are an ideal place to offer these services because they are the central hub for all children.



## The Silver Tsunami

Florida’s fastest growing demographic group is seniors over 65, nearly 20% of the population. Among those seniors, 32% live above the poverty line, but cannot afford even a modest living. As our population ages, Florida must maximize funding for home and community-based services, such as ‘Community Care for the Elderly’, to provide support for older adults and reduce the cost burden for Florida families and taxpayers. The average monthly cost to care for a senior in the CCE Program is \$605 compared to \$2,277 for nursing home care, which many individuals and families cannot afford. Currently **72,000 seniors statewide are on waitlists** for home care support services. Home-based programs have proven to maintain the dignity of the elderly while saving money for families and taxpayers.



## Behavioral Health

According to SAMHSA, approximately 8% of Americans suffer from substance use disorders and 18% from mental illness. This trend has contributed to the opiate epidemic, in which 5,617 Floridians overdosed in 2016. In the midst of this epidemic, another trend began to emerge: the rise of suicides which have increased nationally by 25% since 1999. Comprehensive prevention and treatment services are more important now than ever before. It is important the Florida legislature continue to increase funding to expand prevention services that allow access to evidence-based practices which include early interventions for youth to prevent substance use and address warning signs of mental illness and suicide prevention.

## PROPOSED CHANGES

Florida’s United Ways urge the 2020 Florida Legislature to:

- **DELETE** statutory language which restricts access to federal dollars for school-based mental healthcare.
- **MAXIMIZE** home and community-based services for older adults to reduce nursing home costs and waitlists.
- **INCREASE** targeted funding for prevention and treatment services for substance use disorders and mental health services.