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Gov. Scott's "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget Fights for Patients and Families

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) highlighted Governor Rick Scott's "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget, which invests \$27 billion in the agency. The Governor's proposed budget includes important initiatives to improve transparency and protect patients at Florida hospitals, and invests funding to reduce administrative burdens in order to speed up the connection between health care providers and the Floridians they intend to serve.

Governor Scott said, "We have fought to make important reforms to fight price gouging at hospitals and help Floridians make informed decisions regarding the care offered to them and their families. This year, we are continuing our commitment to fighting for Florida patients and families by implementing initiatives that save millions of dollars in hospital costs and reduce burdensome regulations, helping to more easily connect Floridians to the care they need."

Agency Secretary Justin M. Senior said, "With his 'Fighting for Florida's Future' Budget, Governor Scott has continued to improve health care in Florida. By streamlining processes and removing burdensome regulations providers will be able to focus more on the quality of health care than the administrative burdens often associated with the health care field. This budget will allow our Agency to continue to ensure that Medicaid recipients are receiving the highest quality care, as we make investments in technology infrastructure that will help to support our goal of better health care for all Floridians."

The "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget includes:

A savings of \$298 million in hospital costs, which are responsible for the largest increases in Medicaid program expenditures. Governor Scott is committed to fighting for patients and families by working to prevent price gouging and unfair costs for medical care. Public hospitals, not-for-profit hospitals, and for-profit hospitals are all at an all-time low in how much charity care they are providing relative to their record profits. These proposed savings are accomplished by eliminating existing supplemental payments for hospitals who provide less charity care compared to the for-profit hospital industry.

A savings of \$581 million by allowing Medicaid managed care plans to reimburse hospitals at more efficient rates compared to the traditional Medicaid program. Hospital



services are the only services in Medicaid managed care where plans are forced to pay higher rates.

A savings of \$50 million by slowing hospital inflation and eliminating an automatic increase in Medicaid hospital rates.

\$480,000 for improvements to the Online Licensing system and \$610,000 for improvements to the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse, which supports Governor Scott's goal of reducing burdensome regulations on Florida businesses so they can invest more in serving families and communities. The Agency has already worked hard to eliminate duplication in the employee/operator background screening process and has reduced the burden and costs for those applying to work with children and vulnerable adults in Florida, and the "Fighting for Florida's Future Budget" will build on this success. In addition to the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse, the Agency has also worked to make investments in the online licensing system. The requested system modifications will allow providers to submit all licensure applications and changes online. These projects reduce undue burdens on businesses and state agencies by eliminating multiple duplicative screenings, reducing paperwork lowering costs, and ensuring the most effective methods are being used to connect those in need with potential healthcare providers.

\$750,000 for enhancements to the Provider Data Management System to streamline the application process for providers who wish to enroll in the Medicaid program, speeding up providers' ability to begin serving Medicaid patients. These investments from the "Fighting for Florida's Future" Budget will also allow Florida businesses to open sooner which in turns means generating revenue earlier in the business cycle and adding new jobs to the health care economy faster.

Emmett Reed, Executive Director, Florida Health Care Association, said, "Florida Health Care Association is grateful to Governor Scott for his continued support of quality care and services for Florida's frailest elders. We appreciate him fully funding Medicaid for nursing center services and for initiating the dialogue on the creation of a Prospective Payment System. In addition, his 'Fighting for Florida's Future' Budget will help to further streamline the background screening process, allowing qualified employees applying at our centers to enter the long term care workforce faster so they can more quickly begin caring for nursing center residents."

Shad Haston, Florida Assisted Living Association, said, "The 'Fighting for Florida's Future Budget' will allow us to continue to streamline the background screenings and reduce burdens on the licensure process. Governor Scott has shown a continued commitment to growing the health care economy while ensuring the safety of Florida's patients."

Bobby Lolley, Home Care Association of Florida said, "The investments in the Provider Data Management System in the 'Fighting for Florida's Future' Budget will greatly streamline the application process for providers wishing to participate in the Medicaid

program. Thanks to Governor Scott for streamlining the process, and allowing us to open our doors and serve Floridians in the most cost-effective, patient-preferred setting sooner.”

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The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida’s Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 49,000 health care facilities and 43 health plans, and publishes health care data and statistics at www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov. Additional information about Agency initiatives is available via [Facebook \(AHCAFlorida\)](#), [Twitter \(@AHCA_FL\)](#) and [YouTube \(/AHCAFlorida\)](#).