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Agency for Health Care Administration Applauds Governor DeSantis' Prioritization of Patient-Centered Health Care System in Florida Leads Budget Recommendations

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis presented his recommendations in the *Florida Leads*, Budget which continues to prioritize patient-centered health care delivery in Florida. This budget enhances services provided to some of Florida's most vulnerable citizens while also modernizing systems to make them more efficient and effective in supporting improved health outcomes.

Acting Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Shevaun Harris said, "Throughout the current public health emergency, Governor DeSantis has been focused on ensuring that our most vulnerable continue to have access to services. The *Florida Leads* budget recommendations confirm the Governor's commitment to patient-centered health care by including recommendations to enhance mental health services provided to Florida Medicaid participants. We appreciate the Governor's persistent dedication to invest in strategic priorities to better health care outcomes for all Floridians and we look forward to helping to achieve these goals."

Governor DeSantis' health care budget supports enhancements of services and modernizing delivery that will further improve Florida's health care system:

- The budget proposes funding for a new rate level for Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) to support our most vulnerable:
 - The funding will support those who serve people with disabilities and improve access to services. This community is a core constituency of the Medicaid program.
 - The funding creates a new reimbursement level for those with severe behavioral needs.
- The budget proposes funding to make Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) team services a Medicaid state plan covered service.
 - FACT teams are available 24/7 and serve individuals with serious and persistent mental health issues.
 - FACT team services are managed by the Department of Children and Families, and by covering these services through the Medicaid state plan the State of Florida will be able to increase the rate of federal matching funds from 50% to 62.35%, providing a savings to Florida taxpayers.
- The budget proposes funding for projects to improve technology through the Florida Health Care Connections project:

- The funding allows the Agency to continue this multi-year Medicaid system transformation project, which will:
 - Replace the current functions and responsibilities of the current Medicaid fiscal agent by the December 2024 statutory deadline; and
 - Replace outdated and inefficient legacy systems and processes with modern solutions that provide uniform, consistent and improved access to high quality data, and create interoperability with other state Medicaid systems.

Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida CEO, Justin Senior said, “This recommended Florida Leads budget is more proof of Gov. DeSantis’ unwavering support of our frontline healthcare workers treating an estimated nearly 60 percent of Covid-19 inpatients in our 14 safety net hospital systems around the state. His support of the Critical Care Fund is essential to supporting ongoing services at our hospitals to some of the most medically complicated patients in Medicaid who cannot afford private insurance. Thank you, Governor, for this budget and for your continued investment in high quality healthcare for all Floridians.”

Florida Behavioral Health Association President/CEO, Melanie Brown-Woofter said, “We applaud Governor DeSantis’ *Florida Leads* Budget. His steadfast commitment to ensuring Florida’s most vulnerable citizens receive access to critical behavioral health services is to be commended. The budget recommendations to make the Florida Assertive Community Treatment team services a Medicaid state plan covered service will secure additional federal funding that results in cost savings to the state.”

Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities President/CEO, Suzanne Sewell said, “Thank you Governor DeSantis for recognizing and prioritizing providers of Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in the Florida Leads budget. The budget recommendations to increase rates for these providers addresses the critical need of Floridians who have behavioral health needs while also addressing the base level funding needs.”

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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 44,000 health care facilities and 53 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 \(/AHCAFlorida\)](#).