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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 6, 2022

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## **Governor DeSantis' Freedom First Budget Makes Investments in Florida's Health Care System**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** – Last week, Governor DeSantis signed the Freedom First Budget. Beginning July 1, the Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) will continue its work to empower consumers, prioritize patients, and promote high quality care among health care providers.

“From the beginning of his administration, Governor DeSantis has pursued a bold agenda to make Florida’s health care system the most cost effective, transparent, and high-quality health care system in the nation,” **said Secretary Simone Marstiller**. “The Freedom First Budget will empower consumers in making informed health care decisions and providers in delivering high quality care through significant funding.”

The budget signed by Governor DeSantis supports Agency priorities including:

### **Increasing Transparency in Health Care and Prescription Drug Prices**

Since the beginning of his Administration, Governor DeSantis has championed health care reforms that promote transparency and prioritize patients. The Freedom First Budget includes nearly \$4 Million to bolster these efforts:

- **\$950,000** to modernize Florida’s prescription drug price transparency portal, known as MyFloridaRx. The funds will support a more consumer friendly design and increase the number of publicly available drug prices.
- **\$3 Million** to support consumer awareness of Florida’s online health care data and pricing transparency tools.

### **Lowering the cost of Insulin and Epinephrine**

While the Agency continues to wait on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to lower the cost of prescription drug prices through Florida’s Canadian Prescription Drug Importation program, the Freedom First Budget includes authority for the Agency to negotiate prices for drugs ineligible for importation, such as insulin and epinephrine, for Floridians served by state programs.

### **Ensuring Access to Comprehensive Cancer Care**

In addition to the reforms in SB 1950, the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Program, to ensure access to comprehensive cancer care for Floridians enrolled in Medicaid, the Freedom First Budget includes an estimated \$156 Million to support individuals enrolled in Medicaid who receive services at Florida’s National Cancer Institute designated cancer centers.



## **Prioritizing Seniors Aging in Place**

In full support of Governor DeSantis' Seniors First Strategy, the Freedom First Budget includes \$182 Million for seniors enrolled in the Program for the All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a 50% increase over the current fiscal year.

## **Supporting Providers in Retaining a Skilled Workforce**

The Freedom First Budget includes \$486 Million to offset increases in labor costs for health care providers supporting Floridians enrolled in Medicaid.

## **Caring for Florida's Most Vulnerable**

In addition to workforce funding, the Freedom First Budget includes targeted investments to support high quality care for vulnerable populations, including:

- **\$85 Million** for stand-alone specialty children's hospitals serving medically complex patients. This funding is contingent on the Hospital having an established contract with all Medicaid Managed Care Plans.
- **Nearly \$30 Million** for intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to account for costs and inflation.
- **More than \$6 Million** to support pediatric lung, adult lung, heart, liver, and adult and pediatric intestinal/multi-visceral transplants.
- **Nearly \$3 Million** to off-set Medicaid rate increases for maternal fetal medicine.

## **Leveraging Technology to Promote Coordinated Care**

The Freedom First budget provides \$112 Million to support the continuation of the Florida Health Care Connections project. The project is intended to improve access to and quality of health care data and enhance integration between state of Florida agencies that service similar populations.

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The Agency for Health Care Administration is Florida's chief health policy and planning entity. The Agency is responsible for administering the Florida Medicaid program, the licensure and regulation of nearly 50,000 health care facilities, and empowering consumers through health care transparency initiatives. Additional information about the Agency is available via [Facebook \(AHCAFlorida\)](#) and [Twitter \(@AHCA\\_FL\)](#).