

October 15, 2024

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
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Tallahassee, FL 32399
GovernorRon.DeSantis@eog.myflorida.com

Secretary Jason Weida
Agency for Health Care Administration
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SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Governor DeSantis and Secretary Weida,

We are local and statewide organizations deeply concerned about our communities in the wake of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Helene alone led to an [anticipated loss](#) of 40,000 to 50,000 jobs, with further job loss expected from Milton. With businesses closed because of damage or lack of access to critical services, the impacts of these storms will be long-lasting. Floridians have lost their homes, their jobs, and as a result, their economic security. Under these conditions, access to health care is inevitably challenging, if not impossible. Some residents will no longer have access to employer-covered health coverage, others will face increased costs as they contend with increased travel times to providers, and others will have health conditions exacerbated by housing insecurity. As we work together to support recovery efforts, we urge you to apply to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for all available disaster [flexibilities](#) to enhance Medicaid accessibility for our residents.

By utilizing the disaster flexibilities offered by CMS, Florida can implement crucial measures, including:

- **Streamlined Enrollment Processes:** Simplify the application process, including adding additional health care providers and community agencies to the list of qualified entities who may conduct presumptive eligibility, to ensure that those affected can access Medicaid benefits without delay.
- **Continuous Coverage:** Extend redetermination period for non-MAGI eligibility determinations to 12 months, giving aged and disabled Medicaid recipients 12 months of continuous coverage regardless of a change in circumstances.
- **Telehealth Services:** Maximize the benefits for which delivery via telehealth is available, to provide essential care to those unable to travel.

- **Temporary Dislocation:** Opt to consider individuals who have evacuated from the state to continue to be state residents for eligibility purposes.
- **Extend Period for Non-citizen Applicants:** Provide an extension of the 90 day reasonable opportunity period for non-citizens making a good faith effort to obtain any necessary documentation.
- **Expand Use of Self-Attestation:** Allow residents to self-attest to certain required information for Medicaid applications and renewals rather than require them to obtain documents that are difficult to retrieve or that may have been destroyed in the hurricane.
- **Extra Time for Annual Reviews:** Provide families a minimum of two extra months to complete annual reviews that are otherwise due in October, as was done for KidCare enrollees.
- **Suspend Prior Authorization for Prescription Drugs & Certain Medical Supplies:** Remove the requirement for 1) clinical review for the dispensing of a medication and certain necessary medical supplies; or 2) extend approvals for the quantity of medication and supplies for which they were approved.

As our communities begin the arduous journey of recovery, it is imperative that we remove barriers to health care access. Applying for these disaster flexibilities is a critical step toward ensuring that every Floridian can receive the care they need during this challenging time.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We are confident that with your leadership, we can take decisive action to support our residents and help them navigate the recovery process.

Signed,

Catalyst Miami
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Florida Health Justice Project
Florida Policy Institute
Florida Voices for Health
SEIU Florida