



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Florida Business Leaders Converge in Tallahassee to Call on the House to Take Action on the Senate's FHIX Program

TALLAHASSEE – Business leaders from across the state gathered today in the historic capitol to urge the Florida House of Representatives to work with the Florida Senate to address the state's health care crisis and reduce the financial burden uncompensated care places on Florida businesses.

Representatives of statewide business associations and local chambers of commerce stood with business owners to express their support for the Senate's proposed solution – a comprehensive health care package that includes the Florida Health Insurance Affordability Exchange (FHIX) program.

High praise was given to Senate President Andy Gardiner, who has championed the effort. President Gardiner joined approximately 50 members of the [A Healthy Florida Works](#) coalition today and reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to developing a health care solution for Florida's businesses and families.

"Florida's businesses are suffering from rising health insurance premiums and are now facing financial penalties if they can't provide health care coverage to employees. The business community has called on the Legislature to address these issues and develop a solution. Thankfully, the Florida Senate has heard our message loud and clear," said Julio Fuentes, President and CEO of the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and A Healthy Florida Works member. "President Gardiner and the Senate have come up with a good plan. Now, it's time for the House to come sit down at the negotiating table and work with the Senate to produce a plan that's in the best interest of our state."

The Senate's proposed FHIX program would use available funds to increase coverage to approximately 800,000 low income, working Floridians, significantly reducing the billions of dollars of uncompensated care each year. Health care coverage would be extended through a private option plan, promoting competition and choice. FHIX includes eligibility criteria and promotes personal responsibility and healthy lifestyles for some of Florida's most vulnerable. The plan has garnered widespread support from businesses and individuals from all over Florida.

In 2013, care of uninsured patients in Florida cost almost \$3 billion, driving up premiums and expenses for individuals, families and businesses across the state. By reducing the number of uninsured, FHIX would lead to healthier lives and lower health care costs for businesses.

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Businesses Ask House to Take Action on Health Care

Page 2 of 2

“Extending health care coverage to working Floridians is good for families and good for Florida’s economy. We understand and appreciate the caution the Florida House has in blindly extending traditional Medicaid – and that’s exactly why we are so supportive of the Senate’s FHIX proposal. FHIX is a forward-thinking, free-market reform that requires personal responsibility and private sector creativity,” said Tammy Perdue, General Counsel for Associated Industries of Florida, another A Healthy Florida Works member. “We encourage the Florida House to use these last 18 days of session to join with the Florida Senate and the business community and embrace a Florida-centric, market-based health care solution for the uninsured that also saves billions in annual health care costs, spurs job creation and keeps the economic engine of our state running.”

A Healthy Florida Works is a statewide coalition of nearly 800 business members, statewide business associations, nearly 30 local chambers of commerce and more than 110,000 individual members who believe the State of Florida should use available federal funding to extend health care coverage to approximately 800,000, uninsured Floridians. For more information about the coalition, visit www.ahealthyfloridaworks.com.

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