

Health Care

Employer sponsored health care benefits have become a very important tool for recruiting and retaining employees. However, over the years, benefits have decreased as the cost of coverage has increased. Employers have tried to mitigate cost increases by moving to consumer driven plans and increasing co-payments and deductibles paid by their employees. With the continued recession tightening the pocketbooks of employers and their employees, now is the time to address cost drivers in the system. As such, AIF's health care priorities are as follows:

Medicaid Reform

AIF ENCOURAGES the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to approve the waiver requested by Florida for the implementation of these important reforms.

Last session, AIF worked diligently to ensure passage of a comprehensive Medicaid reform package designed to slow the hemorrhaging that is occurring with the cost of our current program. The new program is scheduled to be implemented by July 2012. However, delays from the federal government concerning approval of the waiver, that Florida must have to begin implementation, threaten to allow the cost of the Medicaid Program to continue to grow.

Health Insurance Mandates

AIF OPPOSES the addition of new health care provider or benefit mandates that will drive up the overall cost of coverage and result in higher premiums for employers and their employees.

Florida has more than 50 mandates that range from requiring the use of specific kinds of providers or certain services and procedures to restricting what is allowed in private contracts between an insurer and provider.

Hospital Taxing Districts

AIF SUPPORTS creating broad-based funding sources to enhance access to health care services. AIF SUPPORTS efforts to redistribute ad valorem tax dollars in a manner that creates equity in funding for all providers based upon their levels of service to Medicaid, uninsured and underinsured residents of a district.

Hospital districts were first established to ensure

Florida's indigent residents had access to hospital facilities; however, in recent years, the role of these districts has expanded beyond their intended purpose. As a result, some of the areas in which these districts operate have seen escalating local taxes without accountability. Hospitals and health care facilities that receive tax revenues should be held strictly accountable for the manner in which such funds are used.

Low Income Pool (LIP) Council

AIF SUPPORTS the elimination of the Low Income Pool (LIP) Council achieved during the 2011 Legislative Session and favors the creation of an alternative model based on sound formulas, cost efficiency considerations, and the volume and quality of care provided.

The purpose of the fund should be to spread dollars on a "broad and fair" basis so that the dollars follow the patient wherever care is provided. To increase transparency and accountability, AIF recommends that these taxpayer dollars be distributed by the Legislature based on a standard model and in consultation with the Agency for Health Care Administration, and without influence from self-motivated advisory councils.

AIF will also engage in Health Care related issues by:

- Supporting the extension of the current **sovereign immunity** protections to physicians and hospitals when treating patients in an emergency setting such as the emergency room.
- Supporting a comprehensive cost study to be performed on the 52 provider and benefit **mandates** that are currently in law. Further, if a mandate is proposed during the session, a cost study should be conducted so that policymakers can balance the benefit of the mandate with the cost.
- Supporting increased transparency and accountability when a **public hospital** is sold or leased so that the community's health care needs and the taxpayers' investment are protected.
- Opposing the expansion of ad valorem taxing authority of **state taxing districts** for the funding of health care facilities.



AIF Lobby Team Members Assigned to the Area of Health Care:

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