

Impact of the Senate Proposal on Healthy Start (rev 4-8-21)

The House is taking the right approach by supporting the Healthy Start system of care put in place to protect Florida's pregnant women and babies. The Senate's proposal will have a negative impact on pregnant women and babies.

1. The Senate's proposal is a **significant and unwarranted disruption to the entire system of care** for pregnant women and infants.
 - **More than 109,000 pregnant women and babies on Medicaid will be negatively impacted.**
 - Healthy Start employs nearly 1,000 fully trained and effective professionals whose jobs may be in jeopardy.
 - Healthy Start was rightfully carved out of Medicaid managed care reform because of concern for birth outcomes. The intent was to ensure high risk pregnant women were provided extensive education and wraparound supports at the community level.
2. Health plans are not currently duplicating the essential services provided by Healthy Start for 30 years and would not be given \$41 million more to do provide these services.
 - The Senate proposal would be a **significant cut to services for vulnerable pregnant women and babies**. Health plans will be unable fill the gap.
 - This cut would result in a complete dismantling of a successful service network in place for 30 years.
 - Individual health plans would be unable to rebuild the coordinated intake system and network that supports pregnant women/new mothers in a comprehensive and effective way.
3. Health plans may or may not choose to contract with Healthy Start in every County. They may elect to only provide their current service array which does not compare favorably to Healthy Start's complete services regimen.
 - **Florida would lose the universal program and safety net** put in place by the legislature 30 years ago to protect babies and support families.
 - Health plans are not the boots on the ground in the community like Healthy Start.
 - Health plans prioritize services for medically high-risk pregnant women. Many birth outcomes are impacted by other social risk factors. These families would fall through the cracks.
 - Health plans do not have the community partnerships needed to coordinate and meet the needs of families.
4. **Some Healthy Start Coalitions report their survival would be in jeopardy** with a funding cut so large.
 - A 63% cut in funding would jeopardize the infrastructure and sustainability of many Coalitions. Without adequate infrastructure, the **\$22.4 million in additional services leveraged by Coalitions would be in jeopardy**.

Services provided by Healthy Start that would be lost by budget reductions and service interruption

Florida's Healthy Start home visiting services are intensive, long-term relationships that are focused on customized family support and counseling. Health plans offer home health, shorter term visits focused more on medical concerns that complement and not duplicate Healthy Start.

In addition to pregnancy care and care coordination, Healthy Start empowers families with education and support for parenting skills, finances, career goals, emotional health, oral health, relationships, sexually transmitted infections, stress reduction, substance use during pregnancy, and more.

Once the baby is born, parents are assisted with appropriate expectations for age and developmental stage, child health, nutrition and safety, comforting and stimulating infants, effects of violence on children, family dynamics including sibling rivalry, feeding cues, immunizations, managing stress, newborn care and characteristics, discipline techniques and alternatives to spanking, parent/child attachment, safe sleep and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) risk reduction, shaken baby syndrome, and establishing support systems.

These are not services provided by health plans that impact birth outcomes.



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