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*Better Health Care for all Floridians*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Florida Awards \$35 Million to be used toward Primary Care Initiatives**

**Tallahassee, Fla.**— Twenty-eight projects were awarded a total of \$35 million to be used toward initiatives that will establish new, or enhance existing innovative programs to enhance the quality of care and health of low income populations. Approximately \$20 million was awarded to new programs, with nearly \$15 million going toward enhancement of existing primary care programs that were established by the Haridopolos enhanced primary care LIP awards in 2010.

“Through these project funds, we are providing opportunities for enhanced access to primary care at levels of funding not previously available for community initiatives,” said Secretary Liz Dudek. “The State is committed to investing in projects that are proven to increase access to primary care services.”

“This initiative aims to provide Floridians with access to preventative health care services, so they don’t have to rely solely on expensive emergency care,” said Florida Senate President Mike Haridopolos (R-Merritt Island). “The Agency’s action to award these grants will increase this critical access in a number of health care facilities in communities across our state.”

These funds are available as via the Low Income Pool program and entities to receive funds include hospitals, federally qualified health centers, county health departments and other community based provider access systems. A full list of awardees can be viewed at the Agency for Health Care Administration’s website here: [http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/medicaid\\_reform/lip/lip.shtml](http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/medicaid_reform/lip/lip.shtml).

Awardees will use the funds to increase access to primary care by:

- hiring additional staff such as OB/GYN physician and pediatric physicians, dentists and dental assistants,
- increasing the access points for the uninsured and underinsured low income populations by partnering with local health centers, free clinics and local outreach community centers, and
- extending clinic hours to allow greater access during non-traditional business hours, which allow greater access to pediatric urgent care and dental services.

Programs are to stem from three overarching goals, including:

1. Better care for individuals including safety, effectiveness, patient centeredness, timeliness, efficiency, and equity;
2. Better health for populations by addressing areas such as poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and substance abuse; and
3. Reducing per-capita costs.



Awards were based on meeting community health needs, viability of program, focus on reduction of unnecessary emergency room visits, focus on preventable hospitalizations, providing better care for individuals, providing better health care for populations and reducing per capita cost.

The 2012 Legislature appropriated \$35 million in funds to support projects designed to fulfill these requirements. For each project, state share funding is to be provided via allowable Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) funds for local governments.

*The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 40,000 health care facilities and 37 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at [www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov](http://www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov).*

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