

Florida's Medicaid director leaving her job

Christine Jordan Sexton, 08/16/2011 - 12:39 PM

A top state official charged with helping overhaul the state's \$22 billion Medicaid program is leaving her job.

Florida's Deputy Secretary for Medicaid, Roberta Bradford, a soft spoken administrator known for her skills with Medicaid waiver applications, submitted her resignation [letter](#) Aug. 4. Her last day at the **Agency for Health Care Administration** is Sept. 9.

"While a difficult decision, I have chosen to resign as my family has decided to relocate," Bradford wrote in a brief resignation letter to **Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Liz Dudek**. "It has been an honor to serve you and the state's most vulnerable citizens."

Bradford's decision to resign comes as the state continues to negotiate a sweeping Medicaid 1115 waiver with the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**. The waiver allows an existing five county pilot project to operate and is instrumental in the state's ability to collect \$1 billion annually to help pay the costs for the underinsured and uninsured.

Moreover, the Medicaid 1115 waiver--which Florida has been negotiating to extend for more than one year--will be the building block for the state's new mandatory Medicaid managed care program.

Bradford was named to her job in November 2009 and started at the agency in January 2010. She earns \$150,000 annually.

She was hired in part because of her expertise in Medicaid waivers. Between 2007 and 2009 Bradford was a senior associate at Mercer in Atlanta and according to her resume assisted agencies with the development of Medicaid 1115 and Medicaid 1915-b waivers.

This was Bradford's second stint at the Agency for Health Care Administration. She served as Medicaid Health Systems Development Bureau Chief from June 2004 to February 2007.

In a memo announcing her hiring, then-AHCA Secretary **Tom Arnold** noted that "Roberta has extensive experience with the federal government in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and brings an immense knowledge of the health care industry She will be an outstanding leader of our Medicaid Team and will serve as a key member of the Agency Management Team. "

As news of her resignation spread on Tuesday health care lobbyists in Tallahassee agreed that her talent will be missed as Florida moves ahead with securing Medicaid waivers for the sweeping reforms that are upcoming.

Tampa attorney and hospital lobbyist **Jan Gorrie** said Bradford is "very talented and creative and innovative with Medicaid policy. As one of the principal authors of the current waiver, Florida will miss having her at the table during round two negotiations. It will be difficult to fill her shoes. "

Florida Association of Health Plans President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Garner called Bradford "talented and experienced."

"The loss of anyone of her abilities at this time will likely put a temporary strain on the agency, but I am confident that Secretary Dudek will ensure a smooth transition and find an extremely qualified person to fill this critical position."

Former Agency for Health Care Administration Director and hospital executive **Alan Levine** in an email called Bradford "bright."

"I hate to see her leave. She is extremely bright and knows the federal rules inside and out," Levine said.

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