The big news this past week was the final approval on June 15th by CMS to Florida's two-year old, long-debated proposal to overhaul the Medicaid system by requiring beneficiaries statewide to enroll in HMOs and other types of managed-care plans. Almost all of the state's 3.3 million low-income Medicaid patients must move into managed care programs, a sweeping change opposed by many health advocates. The decision was not a surprise: Federal officials signaled earlier this year that they would grant approval. Also, the Obama administration had already signed off on requiring managed care for tens of thousands of Florida seniors who need Medicaid-funded long-term care. But Friday's announcement was a victory for Gov. Rick Scott and Republican lawmakers who approved the proposal to move to statewide Medicaid managed care in 2011, amid controversy about whether the changes would best serve the needs of low-income Floridians. Scott said in a prepared statement. "CMS's final approval of our Medicaid managed care waiver is a huge win for Florida families because it will improve the coordination of care throughout the Medicaid system. Health-care providers can now more effectively manage chronic conditions and work with families to provide preventative treatments." Gov. Rick Scott and leading Republican lawmakers contend that managed care will squeeze savings out of Medicaid, which this year absorbed almost $21 billion of the state's $70 billion budget and is forecast to steadily rise in coming years. Although federal officials pay about 58 percent of the program, the price tag for Florida taxpayers remains significant. Supporters have said the state could save $1 billion a year, once the overhaul approved Friday by the Centers for
A New (Old) Way To Treat Mental Illness

Broward Judge Blasts Child Welfare Officials In Boy's Suspicious Death

U.S. Gives Florida Approval To Move Millions On Medicaid Into HMOs

Scott Calls Medicaid Waiver "Big Win"

Wasserman Schultz Decries Medicaid Coverage Gap

One Month Later, Florida Lawmakers No Closer To Medicaid Deal

Editorial: Medicaid Mulligan

PolitiFact: Did Gov. Rick Scott Give Back $1 Million Grant?

Florida Ranks Third In Country For Health Records Payments

Following The Money

Cuts Force Peace River to Close Jeanene Brown Drop-In Facility

Prepare for Launch of 'Get Covered' Campaign

Feds Approve FL Medicaid Waiver

Editorial: Sending A Message On Health Care Fraud

Grim Numbers Result From Failure To Expand Medicaid

Medicare and Medicaid Services is fully implemented.

You may also access additional articles from the links on the left entitled "Quick Links To Additional Stories".

Feature Story One

Medicaid Expansion Do-Over?

The Florida Legislature might take a mulligan on Medicaid expansion. Golf purists frown on the practice of replaying a stroke following an errant shot, but Floridians should welcome the potential for a political do-over on Medicaid. During the annual legislative session, which ended in May, the Legislature failed to expand access to Medicaid, the federal-state health insurance program for low-income Americans.

Read more>>

Feature Story Two

Scott's Veto Of Mental Health Bill

Gov. Rick Scott's veto of a mental health bill this week not only surprised the Florida Legislature, which passed it unanimously, it contradicted the efforts of his own agency, the Department of Children and Families. The bill, which would have shortened from five years to three years the time frame in which a judge would have to decide whether a person was mentally competent to stand trial, among other provisions, was rejected by Scott because reducing the time frame "could pose a serious public safety risk."

Read more>>

Feature Story Three

With Obamacare Deadlines Near, Florida Democrats Prod Public And Legislature To Sign On

Florida Democrats and allied groups are planning hearings, working phones and walking door-to-door to advance Obamacare in an orchestrated push-back against Republicans and business leaders warning that the health care law is a disaster on the horizon. State legislators from Broward and Palm Beach counties have scheduled town hall sessions in coming weeks on health care and the effort to expand Medicaid coverage.

Read more>>
Breeanna DeGrove is all too familiar with traditional face-to-face bullying, and that's why she doesn't even use social media. The 12-year-old used her experience for positives, starting a Bully Busters Club at her school and trying to help other kids. But she and her mom have agreed there's no need to open the door to Facebook, Twitter, and the sort of public shaming that can come with mixing youth and an electronic audience.

Read more>>

**Mental Health System: Judge Getting Cost-Saving Results**

Miami-Dade County Judge Steven Leifman is chairman of the Florida Supreme Court's Task Force on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues in the Courts. "We are taking a comprehensive approach to the problem," he said. "That is the only way to do it. The disorder is complicated. The treatment is not. We know a lot more about the brain than we did ten years ago."

Read more>>

**We Must Act To Save Endangered Black Men**

-Randy B. Nelson

Have you ever noticed the intense passion and commitment exhibited by many when it comes to saving endangered animals? Don't get me wrong, I am a bona fide animal lover. But as I reflect on the condition of black men and boys in America, one would be hard-pressed to find a more endangered species. Black males typically rank at the top of most negative social, financial, health and educational indicators.

Read more>>

**Feds OK Medicaid Overhaul**

The federal government gave final approval Friday to Florida's long-debated proposal to overhaul the Medicaid system by requiring beneficiaries statewide to enroll in HMOs and other types of managed-care plans. The decision was not a surprise: Federal officials signaled earlier this year that they would grant approval. Also, the Obama administration had already signed off on requiring managed care for tens of thousands of Florida seniors who need Medicaid-funded long-term care.

Read more>>

**Wilkins to Meet With Agencies Over Contract Dispute**

A clash between the secretary of Florida's Department of Children and Families and community-based care organizations charged with delivering child welfare services will get an airing Friday in Orlando. The community-based agencies are resisting a move by DCF Secretary David Wilkins to tighten his control of their contracts -- including the right to name their chief executives, financial and operating officers.

Read more>>

I hope you enjoy this week's newsletter and look forward to your input.

Sincerely,
Manatee Nonprofits Honored For Financial Management

Take a bow, Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee and Manatee Glens. Both were winners in the 2013 Nonprofit of the Year Awards presented recently by the Tampa Bay Business Journal. The 8-year-old program recognizes organizations for fiscal responsibility as well as the good they do in their communities.

Read more>>

2013 Board Meetings Training And Events

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<tr>
<td>6/21</td>
<td>The film HOME will screen at 3:30pm at the Colony Theatre, 1040 Lincoln Rd. in Miami Beach. Film website</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/7-8/9</td>
<td>Annual Conference Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort Orlando</td>
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Bob Sharpe
President/CEO
Florida Council for Community Mental Health

Email Bob here