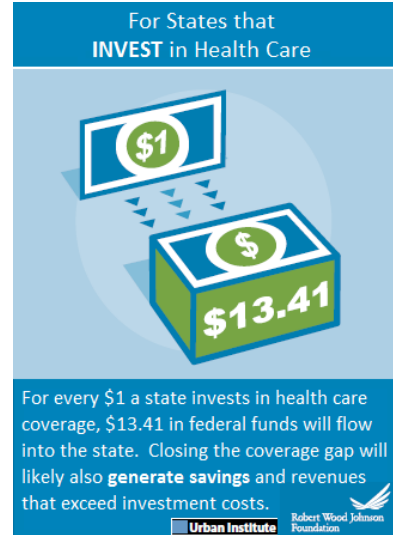


Florida should close the coverage gap to insure access to mental health care for more Floridians. Every dollar invested by the state to cover low-income Floridians would result in a return of \$13.41 in matched and enhanced federal funds.<sup>1</sup> Some of this money would shore up Florida’s flagging mental health system that currently ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in per capita spending.<sup>2</sup>

People with serious mental illnesses (SMI)<sup>a</sup> are frequently uninsured and must access services through state and locally funded community mental health centers. The community health centers are key providers of mental health services, but they lose \$32 million in annual revenue because there is no



### Florida Mental Health Facts

- Florida ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in per capita spending for mental health services.<sup>2</sup>
- Florida ranks 44<sup>th</sup> for access to mental health services.<sup>6</sup>
- 228,840 uninsured Floridians have a serious mental health and/or a substance use condition.<sup>7</sup>
- 66,723 Floridians with SMI were denied access to mental health care in 2014.<sup>4</sup>
- 68,000 fewer Floridians would have experienced major depression in 2014 had Florida closed the coverage gap.<sup>4</sup>
- There are 41,200 uninsured veterans in Florida’s coverage gap; one-third of them have (13,596) have mental illnesses and lack access to consistent mental health care.<sup>4</sup>
- Floridians with SMI are skilled, (37% are college educated; 49% are high school graduates). With effective care, they are an asset to the labor force.<sup>4</sup>

reimbursement for services they provide to uninsured people.<sup>3</sup>

Most community mental health center patients have incomes below the federal poverty line, placing them in the coverage gap.<sup>3</sup> If the people in the coverage gap had insurance to pay for mental health services, funding for community mental health services and access to care would increase. The reimbursements from health plan carriers for mental health services would yield stronger community-based models of care and reduce reliance on expensive taxpayer funded crisis and inpatient care.<sup>4</sup> Closing the coverage gap would bring a stable source of consistent health care to Floridians with mental illnesses.

Today, Florida state and county governments provide the lion’s share of the expenses for providing community-based services to uninsured people living with mental illnesses. Florida currently funds 74.4% of mental health services from state taxpayer supported general revenue.<sup>5</sup> Accepting federally allocated funds to provide coverage for low-income Floridians would shift the much of the cost of services away from state taxpayers and assure access to

*Access to behavioral health treatment is important because of the harmful consequences of untreated conditions, which may result in worsening health, increased medical costs, negative effects on employment and workplace performance, strain on personal and social relationships, and possible incarceration<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>a</sup> SAMHSA defines SMI as a mental disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders) that results in serious functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits 1 or more major life activities



## Closing the Florida Coverage Gap Increases Access to Mental Health Care



services for all working low-income Floridians.

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