

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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GOVERNOR SCOTT'S 2014-15 BUDGET MOVES HEALTH FORWARD IN FLORIDA

~ Initiatives Focus on Improving Health, Enhancing Research and Serving Children ~

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Health today highlighted Governor Rick Scott's proposed 2014-15 "It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget" which will invest in key areas to improve the health of Florida's families and communities. The budget prioritizes cancer research and treatment, protecting the health and safety of Florida's children with special medical needs and promoting healthy lifestyles.

"Governor Scott's commitment to health for all people in Florida is demonstrated in this year's budget," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "With public-private collaboration and a sustained focus on Healthiest Weight, the 'It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget' will lead to better health and a brighter future for Florida's children, adults and families."

Cancer Research

Governor Scott's proposed 2014-15 budget provides \$80 million to assist Florida's existing cancer centers to become National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated Cancer Centers and to promote peer-reviewed research in cancer and tobacco related diseases. NCI-designated Cancer Centers are on the frontline of developing and implementing new treatments for cancer patients. Investment in cancer care and research can improve the quality of life for Floridians, promote the state's economic vitality and create more jobs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"The Governor is placing Florida in a national leadership role for cancer research and treatment," said State Representative Marti Coley. "This investment will help find cures and bring hope to so many families whose loved ones are battling cancer."

"In Florida we are addressing cancer in a systematic manner that involves evidence-based research and a peer-reviewed process," said Dr. Thomas J. George Jr., Chair of the Florida Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council (C-CRAB). "To win this war against cancer, we must keep a long-term view and this new funding proposed by Governor Scott is an investment in ongoing improvement and continued excellence among Florida's premier cancer institutions."

"With more than 114,000 Floridians expected to receive a cancer diagnosis this year, it is encouraging to see research as a top priority in this year's budget," said Ralph DeVitto, Executive Vice President of the American Cancer Society's Florida Division. "We have an opportunity for greater collaboration across the state so that Floridians can enjoy more birthdays with their families, free from the burden of cancer."

Protecting Children

This year's budget proposes \$2.8 million to strengthen the ability of the state's 25 Child Protection Teams (CPT) to serve families and protect children. The security and safety of Florida's children is of primary concern. The Department's Division of Children's Medical

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Services oversees CPTs that provide assessments to assist in alleged child abuse and neglect cases. The teams are medically directed and multidisciplinary, which allows them to assess safety and risk for children with special medical needs.

“The state of Florida has a duty to serve and protect the children of our state,” said State Senator Alan Hays. “The Governor has carefully chosen to invest in areas that will protect vulnerable children, serve families and improve the process.”

“Providing care and protection for Florida’s children is a much needed and an essential service that helps ensure a positive and encouraging future for our state,” said Dr. Gerry Schiebler, Distinguished Service Professor of Pediatrics, Emeritus at the University of Florida, College of Medicine. “The funding proposed in the Governor’s budget will help protect more children throughout the state. A key component of that effort is the Child Protection Teams in the Children’s Medical Services unit in the Department of Health.”

“Governor Scott leads with compassion and a focus on priorities, as demonstrated by this proposed investment in the state’s CPTs,” said Julie Hurst, president of the Board of Directors for the Florida Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers. “We need to do whatever is necessary to protect the children in our state and this funding will enable the CPTs to be more effective in serving children with unique medical needs.”

Early Steps Programs

The Early Steps Program provides a coordinated system of early intervention services and this year’s budget proposes investing \$3.6 million to help with assessments, early intervention and support systems, home visits and family support. Florida’s Early Steps Program serves families who have an infant or toddler (birth to thirty-six months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Through a comprehensive team of professionals, the Early Steps Program seeks to help families include developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for their child during everyday activities and routines. Early intervention can help a child experience healthier development and long-term education costs can be reduced.

“Children who face developmental challenges early in life need additional time, attention and resources to help them succeed,” said State Senator Anitere Flores. “Governor Scott’s support for the Early Steps Program will help families to establish a plan that meets their child’s specific needs.”

“Each year we see how important that early window is in the development of infants and toddlers with developmental delays,” said Dr. Ilene Wilkins, CEO of UCP of Central Florida. “This continued commitment by Governor Rick Scott to fund this important program demonstrates that the state of Florida recognizes the importance of giving children the best opportunity to succeed in the long term.”

“Reaching an infant or toddler during key developmental transitions can lead to improved performance and growth throughout childhood,” said Phyllis K. Kalifeh, President of Children’s Forum. “I applaud Governor Scott for again making this a priority in his budget and ensuring that Florida’s children with special needs and their families have the support and resources needed to thrive.”

Healthiest Weight Florida

The proposed budget authorizes \$2 million in budget authority to address the top public health threat that challenges Florida - weight. Currently, only 36 percent of Floridians are at a healthy

weight and the costs of care for chronic diseases associated with excess weight—diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and arthritis—are unsustainable and are estimated to cost \$34 billion over the next 17 years. The Department has launched a major statewide initiative, Healthiest Weight Florida, which brings together state agencies, local governments, not-for-profit organizations, schools, businesses, faith-based organizations and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living.

“I am encouraged by Governor Scott’s effort to help the people of Florida achieve their healthiest weight,” said State Senator Aaron Bean. “Promoting this initiative can save Floridians billions of dollars in health care costs and create healthy communities where families and businesses can thrive.”

“Through Healthiest Weight Florida, health care professionals and community leaders have the opportunity to come together and more effectively address our epidemic of excess weight,” said Alan Harmon, M.D., FACP, President of the Florida Medical Association. “Governor Scott is providing the leadership needed on this issue to place Florida on track to becoming the healthiest weight state in the nation.”

“I wholeheartedly support the work of the Florida Department of Health to address the issue of weight,” said Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge, President of the Board of Directors for the Florida Association of Counties. “Every Florida community has a role to play and I am pleased to see this is a priority in the governor’s budget.”

To view Florida’s “It’s Your Money Tax Cut Budget”, please visit: www.FLItsYourMoney.com.

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