

Take Action to Protect Healthcare Coverage for 45,000 Floridians: Tell Legislators to Heal Florida's Healthcare and Increase the Tobacco Tax!

Remember the old military recruiting posters that read, "Uncle Sam Wants YOU"? Well, (**your hospital/health system**) *NEEDS YOU!* We need the active support and involvement of our (**employees/team members**) to convince Florida's state lawmakers to increase the state tobacco tax and protect the healthcare coverage for 45,000 Floridians currently dependent on the Medicaid Medically Needy and Medicaid Aged/Disabled programs.

"This is a case where one person really can make a difference," said CEO (**name**). "I am encouraging every (**employee/team member**) to learn more about Florida's budget crisis and get involved for the sake of our patients, our mission, and our future."

How to get involved? Just go to: www.fha.org/coalition. The "Coalition to Heal Florida's Healthcare" is a broad-based group led by the Florida Hospital Association and others, spearheading efforts to raise the tobacco tax. At their site, you will learn more facts and how to take action. For instance, did you know that:

- Florida's tobacco tax is already the fifth lowest in the nation. A \$1.00 per pack tax increase would have a major impact on reducing teen smoking and ensure that thousands of underinsured or needy Floridians do not lose lifesaving healthcare coverage.
- You will also learn more about the Medicaid Medically Needy and Medicaid Aged/Disabled programs and why Florida cannot eliminate coverage for these vulnerable Floridians.
- You will also be able to educate others on the need for an increase in the tobacco tax by:
 1. **Sending an e-mail to your state legislators.** "This is the most important thing you can do," noted (**CEO's name**).
 2. **Telling friends and neighbors** about the budget crisis. Use the Web to spread the word.
 3. **Registering as an individual member** of the Coalition. You will get updates and news about the campaign.

You can also help in other ways. Become a volunteer; use your contacts with groups or organizations to help educate others about this issue. Our Grassroots Coordinator, (**name/extension**), is eager to invite your organization to be part of the Coalition. Within the bounds of confidentiality, personal or compelling stories about how the crisis is affecting individuals and their healthcare can be used to publicize what the impact of reduced healthcare coverage would do. Contact (**name**), our PR Coordinator for the campaign.

In 2003, the hospital community took the lead in addressing Florida's medical liability crisis. Today, we have a new crisis and the impact on (**hospital/system name**) may be even greater. With your help as a member of the Coalition, we *can* make a difference. Please visit: www.fha.org/coalition. The difference will be *you!*