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Florida Hospital Association Responds to Governor's Medicaid Reform Proposal

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida Hospital Association (FHA) welcomes a dialogue with the Governor and the Legislature on efforts to improve Florida's Medicaid system. Today, the Governor outlined a conceptual reform of the program that provides healthcare coverage to 2.2 million Floridians. Florida's hospitals currently provide care to the Medicaid population as well as contribute more than \$1.3 billion in free care to Florida's uninsured patients. Medicaid is the state/federal partnership that provides comprehensive health coverage for individuals young and old who might otherwise go without medical care, necessary medications and long-term care.

“ This is the first step in a meaningful discussion over Medicaid reform and the Florida Hospital Association is committed to participating in that conversation with the Governor, the Legislature and AHCA Secretary Alan Levine,” said Wayne NeSmith, President of the Florida Hospital Association, which represents more than 200 hospitals in the state.

“ Any effort that modifies the Medicaid program must ensure the continuation of the Upper Payment Limit (UPL) reimbursements to hospitals,” said Wayne NeSmith. “The Governor's staff and Secretary Levine committed to FHA that the UPL program had to be protected if any reform were to move forward and we applaud them for that commitment,” said NeSmith.

The UPL program provides special Medicaid payments to hospitals that provide significant levels of indigent care. This program is funded primarily with local tax dollars and matched with federal funds. In addition to the dialogue on Medicaid reform, FHA will be advocating the restoration of the Medically Needy program, coverage for pregnant women between 150%-185% of the federal poverty level, and coverage for the elderly/disabled during the 2005 Legislative Session.