

# A Florida funding error is draining pediatric care.



The state must act before families' access is impacted.

Florida families who rely on Medicaid are at risk of losing access to everyday, primary pediatric care – an actuarial error by the state government has created a crisis that is draining millions from Florida's pediatric care system, and a deadline to fix it is looming.

If this is not corrected, families will lose access to their pediatricians and have no providers to turn to. What happens next is simple but alarming: Sick kids can't get care. Regular preventive care visits become a luxury. Children end up in emergency rooms for costly care on health issues that a visit to their pediatrician could have prevented.

The state understands the problem but has done nothing to fix it – Florida must act now to resolve this crisis and protect children's access to care.

## What went wrong

Like other states, Florida integrated behavior analysis services – which are used by a subset of the Floridian population with developmental conditions – into Florida's broader Medicaid managed care payment system. However, Florida's implementation of this integration was based on a flawed rate-setting formula that miscalculated the resulting funding split between behavior analysis services and primary pediatric care and in turn created an access crisis for families who rely on Medicaid to afford primary pediatric care.

AHCA used statistically questionable data to set rates, incorrectly assuming that children who use behavioral services are spread evenly across Florida and across all age groups, inadvertently transferring money out of the general pediatric care budget. Their methodology also relied on behavior analysis utilization data that has drawn significant federal scrutiny – evidence of fraud by providers of these services is well-documented nationwide and has been flagged by CMS. This fraud hurts the children who truly need these services too.

That bad math has led to unintended consequences that jeopardize access to pediatric care for hundreds of thousands of Florida families. Florida's math is entirely unprecedented.



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## What happens if it goes unfixed



### Fewer doctors.

Fewer pediatricians will be able to treat kids covered by Medicaid.



### Longer waits.

Families cannot get timely appointments for sick visits, vaccines, or routine exams.



### More ER trips.

Emergency rooms become the only option, at far greater cost and far worse outcomes.

## By the numbers

2M+

Florida children on Medicaid now at risk

15%

decline in rates for pediatric primary care across Florida

20 to 30%

decline in reimbursement in some counties

~\$300M

in pediatric primary care funding lost in a 20-month period

## We're standing up for families

Pediatric Associates is the state's largest pediatric provider, serving more than 300,000 children, and we feel it is our duty to stand up for Florida families who rely on Medicaid because we care about our patients and the well-being of Florida's children. If unchecked, the long-term impact of the state's decision and lack of action will be significant and irreparable.

We've repeatedly raised this issue with Florida's leaders, engaging in good faith for months to identify a resolution to a problem that seems so simple to solve. We met with agency and legislative leadership. While they understood our concerns and the crisis ahead, a fix is yet to come.

We've now been forced to take formal legal action against the state because Florida's children should not have to wait any longer for a solution.

**We are asking the state to restore funding to what it actually costs to care for kids, retroactively and going forward.**