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Florida House of Representatives Passes Legislation to Address Healthcare Disparities in the State Medicaid Program

HB 899 creates a new system to measure Medicaid plan performance and increases transparency for Medicaid Recipients

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - Representative Robin Bartleman (D-Weston)'s Healthcare Disparities bill, [House Bill 899](#), passed on the House Floor Thursday, April 15, 2021.

"The COVID- 19 pandemic has revealed disparities that exist in our health care system", said **Representative Bartleman**. "Yet without data, lawmakers can only guess where these disparities lie. **HB 899** brings greater transparency, ensures that our State's health care dollars are spent efficiently, and makes Florida's Medicaid programs stronger and recipients healthier. I thank my House colleagues for voting in favor of this important bill."

House Bill 899 requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to collect and publicize data based on disability, race, age, primary language, ethnicity, and sex so that policy makers, providers, and Medicaid recipients can make better-informed decisions. AHCA and Medicaid Managed Care plans will then use this data to provide targeted services to Florida's over three million Managed Care Plan recipients. Recipients can then compare these reports to select the Medicaid Managed Care plan that best fits their needs.

Researchers and media outlets have widely reported health disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- According to a report by the [Journal of Internal Medicine](#), Black women in the U.S. are dying from COVID-19 at a higher rate than any other group, male or female, with the exception of Black men.
- A July 2020 edition of the [South Florida Sun Sentinel](#) detailed that Black individuals, "make up nearly 70% of under-45 deaths in Broward County, the highest percentage of counties in South Florida. About 35% of the county's under-45 population is Black... The disparities are not confined to Broward County. Of the 81 people under the age of 45 who have died with COVID-19 in South Florida, only seven were listed in medical examiner records as white, all others were Black, Hispanic, or Asian."

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