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Newly Introduced Bills Would Promote Data-Driven Strategies Within the Medicaid Program to Help Reduce Health Disparities

HB 899/SB 1272 would ensure greater transparency in AHCA data on race & ethnicity

Tallahassee, Fla. - Representative Robin Bartleman (D- Weston) and Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R- Doral) have filed bills, [HB 899/SB 1272](#), that would help reduce health and health care disparities in Florida. This is particularly crucial given staggering [rates of infection and death in communities of color](#) due to the pandemic.

Specifically, the legislation would require the state to disaggregate or break down Medicaid Managed Care Plans' performance measure data based on race, ethnicity, disability, and other demographics; to publicly report these measures; and use these measures to monitor plan performance.

In recent years, while AHCA has reported significant improvement on managed care plans' performance measures, it does not tell the whole story — there is no requirement in Florida law that AHCA collect and report this data broken down by race, ethnicity, primary language, sex or disability. Experts agree that collection of this stratified data is an essential first step for developing targeted strategies to eliminate disparities.

“HB 899 will enable the State of Florida to create informed policy and targeted fiscal decisions to help all Floridians. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the disparities which exist in our healthcare system. To make healthcare access more equitable, it is essential we find where these inequities exist. To achieve this, the first step is to collect relevant and reliable data.” said **Representative Bartleman**.

“I’m proud to sponsor SB 1272 and work towards eliminating health disparities in the state of Florida. This is especially critical given the severe rates of COVID-19 infection and death among minority populations,” said **Senator Rodriguez**.

A 2019 [report](#) by the non-profit Florida Policy Institute highlighted unique opportunities that the Medicaid program provides for addressing disparities: [34 percent of Medicaid enrollees are Hispanic and 26 percent are Black](#). Most are enrolled in managed care plans.

[Florida Department of Health data](#) show that Floridians of color experience higher rates of

illness and death from a number of health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, specific cancers, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, mental health, and asthma.

Passage of HB 899 and SB 1272 is critical if policymakers are serious about reducing Florida health disparities.

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