

KATHY CASTOR
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND POWER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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September 12, 2013

The Honorable Rick Scott
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dr. John Armstrong
Florida State Surgeon General
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin # A00
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1701

RE: Absurd State pronouncement that health navigators are barred from local health departments

Dear Governor Scott and Surgeon General Armstrong:

The State of Florida's pronouncement yesterday that local experts in health plan enrollment, known as "navigators," will be barred from local health department offices is absurd and in direct conflict with the State of Florida Health Improvement Plan. Our neighbors across the state need all assistance possible to review affordable options and obtain health coverage. Your pronouncement is poor public policy and could result in harm to Florida families.

Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau released statistics that demonstrated that 25% of Floridians are uninsured - the second highest in the country. Fortunately, a new online marketplace will be available on October 1 for families and businesses to compare plans and purchase insurance. Significant tax credits for small businesses and individuals will make coverage even more affordable. This also is good news for the majority of Floridians who already have health insurance because they are currently paying to cover the uninsured through cost shifting.

In addition to the plain absurdity of barring expert navigators who can answer health coverage questions from local health department offices where many uninsured seek services, your action is in direct contravention to the State Health Improvement Plan that aims to improve access to health care through goals such as protect the health of Floridians; prevent and reduce illness, injury and death; prevent chronic disease; maximize community partnerships to improve the health of Floridians; and improve access to primary care.

The continued obstruction by you and many state leaders of the Affordable Care Act is contrary to the best interests of the citizens and businesses of Florida. You have rejected millions in tax dollars that rightfully belong in our state. With the rejection of Medicaid

expansion, State officials have heaped the burden of paying for the uninsured on Floridians *with* insurance. Your ideology even led you and the Republican-led Legislature to remove the authority of the Insurance Commissioner to negotiate insurance rates and leave Floridians to the whim of insurance companies. Now, to deny access to navigators at health departments is another obstructionist measure that elevates ideology over the interests of Floridians who simply need to see a doctor or nurse and take personal responsibility through enrolling in affordable insurance.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida – District 14

Cc: The Honorable Pam Bondi, Florida Attorney General
The Honorable Jeff Atwater, Florida Chief Financial Officer
The Honorable Adam Putnam, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture
The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Florida Insurance Commissioner