

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 21, 2020

Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

RE: Implement Free Coronavirus Testing in Florida as Congress Provided, Protect the Uninsured

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We write as members of the Florida congressional delegation serving on the three House committees with jurisdiction over health—Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Education and Labor. In the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, enacted with overwhelming bipartisan support on March 18, 2020, Congress provided a pathway for governors to ensure free COVID-19 testing for uninsured Americans living in their states. Specifically, we authorized governors to amend their state Medicaid plans to cover COVID-19 testing and testing-related services for uninsured individuals, with the federal government paying 100 percent of the cost.

Over a month has elapsed since passage of this law, and we are not aware of any steps you have taken to use the power that Congress granted you in order to bring Florida taxpayer dollars back to serve the community. As a result, some or all of Florida's 2.7 million uninsured residents are not, in fact, able to obtain free COVID-19 testing. Many of these individuals may be forced to forego testing because they cannot afford to do so. This outcome poses a direct threat to their own health and to the health of all Floridians. Additionally, health providers are already under substantial financial pressure due to the COVID-19 crisis, and they should not have to count testing costs for the uninsured as charity care when there is a 100 percent federal match available.

We cannot understand why you would not use this power, when the cost to Florida is nothing and the consequences for public safety in the state are so severe. We are especially bewildered by your inaction in light of the fact that the governor of Texas, another state that has resisted Medicaid expansion under the *Affordable Care Act*, does intend to use his power to temporarily expand Medicaid for this specific purpose only.

Without widespread testing, we will not be able to effectively combat COVID-19 or to re-open Florida's economy in a safe and scientifically-sound way, as we all wish to do. We urge you to use the power that Congress gave you, or to explain to Floridians why you won't do so.

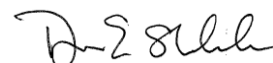
Sincerely,



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



Donna E. Shalala  
Member of Congress