



**CHILDREN'S TRUST**  
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

October 15, 2021

Ms. Shelby Higgins  
Project Officer  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S2-25-26  
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Dear Ms. Higgins:

On behalf of Children's Trust of Alachua County, we would like to express our strong support of Florida's request to amend its Section 1115(a) demonstration titled "Florida's Medicaid Family Planning" (Project Number 11-W-00135/4), which extends postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months.

Children's Trust of Alachua County funds programs in Alachua County designed to improve birth outcomes for all women. Through our community grant with Pritzker Children's Initiative, our goals is to increase participation rates for families with children prenatal to three in our maternal child health home visiting programs, our local WIC program, Healthy Start Program, Healthy Families Program, as well as the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). We also have the NewboRN program, which is a program that offers every pregnant mom in Alachua County a visit from a Registered Nurse within 7 days of delivery. By placing a strong emphasis on reducing racial disparities in birth outcomes, as well as maternal morbidity and mortality we are strengthening our systems in Alachua County. Extending postpartum Medicaid coverage will strengthen it even more.

Medicaid coverage has played a crucial role in ensuring access to prenatal care for pregnant women. Pregnant women in Florida who access adequate prenatal care are twice as likely to have a full-term, normal birthweight baby than mothers who do not have adequate prenatal care.

Timely postpartum visits provide an opportunity to address chronic pregnancy-related health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension; mental health status, including postpartum depression; and substance abuse disorders. Currently the rate of maternal mortality for Black women is three times that of their White counterparts. Extending coverage from 60 days to 12 months postpartum will be another critical tool in Florida's efforts to decrease maternal morbidity rates among Black women specifically and Florida mothers, in general.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colin Murphy", is written over the word "Respectfully,".

Colin Murphy  
Executive Director