

**CHOICES INDIGENT CARE SURTAX USE PLAN
EFFECTIVE July 13, 2010**

**Alachua County Department of Community Support Services
CHOICES Health Services Program**

Community Health Offering Innovative Care and Educational Services

AUTHORITY: Alachua County Ordinance 08- 26 Chapter 39.10. Indigent Care Surtax

PURPOSE: Florida Statute allows Counties to levy an indigent care tax for the provision of healthcare services. The statute is as follows:

Florida Statute 212.055(7) Discretionary sales surtaxes; legislative intent; authorization and use of proceeds.—(c) The ordinance adopted by the governing body providing for the imposition of the surtax must set forth a plan for providing health care services to qualified residents, as defined in paragraph (d). The plan and subsequent amendments to it shall fund a broad range of health care services for indigent persons and the medically poor, including, but not limited to, primary care and preventive care, as well as hospital care. It shall emphasize a continuity of care in the most cost-effective setting, taking into consideration a high quality of care and geographic access. Where consistent with these objectives, it shall include, without limitation, services rendered by physicians, clinics, community hospitals, mental health centers, and alternative delivery sites, as well as at least one regional referral hospital where appropriate. It shall provide that agreements negotiated between the county and providers shall include reimbursement methodologies that take into account the cost of services rendered to eligible patients, recognize hospitals that render a disproportionate share of indigent care, provide other incentives to promote the delivery of charity care, and require cost containment, including, but not limited to, case management. The plan must also include innovative health care programs that provide cost-effective alternatives to traditional methods of service delivery and funding.

(d) For the purpose of this subsection, “qualified residents” means residents of the authorizing county who are:

1. Qualified as indigent persons as certified by the authorizing county;
 2. Certified by the authorizing county as meeting the definition of the medically poor, defined as persons having insufficient income, resources, and assets to provide the needed medical care without using resources required to meet basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, and personal expenses; not being eligible for any other state or federal program or having medical needs that are not covered by any such programs; or having insufficient third-party insurance coverage. In all cases, the authorizing county shall serve as the payor of last resort;
- or

3. Participating in innovative, cost-effective programs approved by the authorizing county;

(e) Moneys collected pursuant to this subsection remain the property of the state and shall be distributed by the Department of Revenue on a regular and periodic basis to the clerk of the circuit court as ex officio custodian of the funds of the authorizing county. The clerk of the circuit court shall:

1. Maintain the moneys in an indigent health care trust fund.
2. Invest any funds held on deposit in the trust fund pursuant to general law,
3. Disburse the funds, including any interest earned, to any provider of health care services, as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d), upon directive from the authorizing county.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a county may not levy local option sales surtaxes authorized in this subsection and subsections (2) and (3) in excess of a combined rate of 1 percent or, if a publicly supported medical school is located in the county, in excess of a combined rate of 1.5 percent.

Sec. 39.10.04. Effective date and duration of surtax.

The surtax levied in section 39.10.02 shall take effect as of January 1, 2005, and shall continue for a period of seven years from that date, and will terminate on December 31, 2011.

The CHOICES Indigent Care Surtax Use Plan shall become effective October 1, 2008 and shall be reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners no less than annually.

DEFINED TERMS

CHOICES Health Services Program: Community Health Offering Innovative Care and Educational Services. Alachua County's Indigent Care program which is administered through the County's Community Support Services Department.

CHOICES Disease Management Program: A program component of CHOICES which provides chronic disease management services for CHOICES Enrollees.

CHOICES Health Education and Wellness Program: A program component of CHOICES Health Services which provides wellness and health promotion information, programs and activities for the benefit of the entire Alachua County community.

Federal Poverty Level Guidelines: Federal Guidelines issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services which outlines income-based poverty calculations.

Innovative Programs: Programs which apply new, radical or substantially different processes or service delivery models to increase positive and improved outcomes. This includes disease management and health education and wellness programs.

Qualified Alachua County Resident: Resident who meets established guidelines for program services and participation.

AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURE OF SURTAX PROCEEDS

The Board of County Commissioners authorizes the use of surtax proceeds. Current use is as follows:

Sec. 39.10.05. Use of surtax proceeds.

The surtax proceeds shall be used to the extent resources are available to provide a broad range of health care services to indigent and medically poor Alachua County residents. The surtax proceeds may also be used for the costs of administering the program provided these costs do not exceed 15 percent of the proceeds collected each fiscal year. Surtax proceeds may be used to provide innovative, cost effective health care programs to Alachua County residents without regard to their income. The Surtax proceeds may be used for costs of providing health care services to Alachua County residents through innovative programs. The surtax proceeds may also be used to fund local, non-profit Mental Health Centers for delivery of mental health services to Alachua County residents. All contracts for health care provider services shall provide that the rate of payment be based on the cost of a specific health care service provided to an Alachua County resident. Specific details for the use of surtax proceeds shall be set forth in a surtax use plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners no less than annually.

Current funding includes:

Safety Net Providers

- Helping Hands Clinic, Inc: Volunteer Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Social Workers and non-clinical community volunteers offer medical evaluations and treatment, psychiatric assessment and medication management and psychosocial support and referral to homeless and poor individuals. Clinic services are reserved for those individuals who lack health insurance coverage or means to purchase care. The target population remains homeless individuals; however local poor residents also receive care.
Current Grant Funding: \$36,000 Annually

- Equal Access Clinic: University of Florida educational training program clinic which provides medical and dental care to indigent Alachua County residents by medical residents and faculty.
Current Grant Funding: \$20,000 Annually

Innovative Programs

- CHOICES Health Education and Wellness Program
Vendor: Alachua County Health Department
Current Budget: \$500,000 Annually
- Community Mobile Health Clinic
 - Vendor: The University of Florida Board of Trustees for the benefit of the College of Medicine, University of Florida.
Current Grant: \$107,000.
- Alachua County Department of Health- FluMist Program
Vendor: Alachua County Department of Health
Current Grant: \$80,000

Eligibility Requirements for Healthcare Services

The Board of County Commissioners establishes eligibility criteria for healthcare services. Participants must meet and maintain established eligibility criteria in order to receive health care provided by the CHOICES Health Services program. Current eligibility criteria is as follows:

- **Alachua County Residency:** Established residency in Alachua County.
- **Citizenship and Immigration Status:** United States citizenship through birth or naturalization or a permanent legal resident.
- **Age:** 18 to 64 years of age. Seniors age 65 and older may be eligible for dental services.
- **Income:** Family income that does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines.
- **Employment:** Employment of 20 hours or more each week. There is no employment requirement for participants age 65 or older; however, income guidelines and other established criteria must be met.
- **Health Insurance:** No access to affordable health insurance coverage as follows:

- Employer does not offer health coverage
- Ineligible for employer health coverage
- Cannot afford employer health insurance coverage based upon established 3% Affordability Criteria: Cost for individual premium is 3% or more of gross income.
- Participants, or those eligible to participate in government sponsored health insurance programs such as Medicaid (except Shared Cost Medicaid), Medicare or Veteran’s Health Benefits are ineligible for health services.

Health Education and Wellness: All Alachua County residents are eligible to participate in programs offered by the CHOICES Health Education and Wellness program without regard to age, income, or work status.

Sec. 39.10.06. Plan for providing healthcare services

The plan for providing a broad range of health care services to qualified Alachua County residents who are indigent, medically poor, or participating in innovative, cost-effective programs approved by the County may include the following components:

- (1) Health care services will be provided to the extent resources are available with a focus on a broad range of health care services.
- (2) A health care program that provides for the innovative education, treatment, and management of chronic diseases for qualified Alachua County residents.

Covered Healthcare Services

The Board of County Commissioners authorizes covered healthcare services. Currently, CHOICES covers Ambulatory and Outpatient Services. The program provides the primary and preventive care services of a primary care physician or healthcare provider, medically necessary specialist services, dental care, disease management, and prescription assistance.

The Summary of Services and Benefits is attached and provides general program information and an overview of covered services and plan exclusions.