

CHOICES INDIGENT CARE SURTAX USE PLAN

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2024

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 health care 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” mean 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 payer of last resort; or
3. Participating in innovative, cost-effective programs approved by the authorizing county;

(e) Monies 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:

4. Maintain the monies in an indigent health care trust fund.
5. Invest any funds held on deposit in the trust fund pursuant to general law.
6. 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 took effect as of January 1, 2005, and continued for a period of seven years from that date, terminating on December 31, 2011.

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

This amendment to the Surtax Use Plan shall become effective October 1, 2024.

DEFINED TERMS

CHOICES Health Services Program: Community Health Offering Innovative Care and Educational Services. CHOICES Health Services, an indigent health care program, is administered through the Alachua County Department of Community Support Services.

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 all revenues collected by the program. 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. 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.

Indigent Healthcare Ten Year Trust

On August 6, 2015 the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the Indigent Health Care Ten Year Trust. The Trust provides funding for a health services grant program designed to help uninsured residents by working in partnership with local health care providers in Alachua County to ensure the stable provision of quality health care services. The Trust identifies three funding opportunities to improve health disparities in the following categories: Medical Services, Oral Health, and Mental and Behavioral Health.

Annual Allocation

The Board of County Commissioners approved funding in the amount of \$753,716.00 for FY 25 to carry out the objectives of the Trust.

The table below and the following information is a general overview of the allocations and spending plan for FY25.

Allocations	Spending Plan for FY25
Administration	\$88,707
Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.	\$200,000
Community Agencies' grant award funding	\$465,009
Total	\$753,716

Criteria

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners received program criteria recommendations from the CHOICES Advisory Board, the Alachua County Health Care Board and other community health stakeholders and developed a set of criteria for grant applicants. Eligible applicants must demonstrate their organization's alignment with the stated mission of the Trust to meet the needs of low-income residents.

- Applicants must be governmental entities or non-profit agencies with current 501(c) (3) status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
- All applicants must have a physical business location or office in Alachua County.
- Funding shall be for a period of three years subject to annual appropriations. Through this amendment to the CHOICES Indigent Care Surtax Use Plan, funds will be awarded for FY25.

Eligibility Requirements

The Board of County Commissioners establishes eligibility requirements for health care services. Awarded applicants are responsible for determining the eligibility of participants and must demonstrate and document that the participant meets and maintain established eligibility criteria in order to receive health care as authorized by the Trust. Eligibility criteria are as follows:

- **Alachua County Residency:** Established residency in Alachua County.
- **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 150% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines.
- **Health Insurance:** No access to affordable health insurance coverage.

Sec. 39.10.06. Plan for providing health care 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.