

THE COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

PROVIDING A SAFETY NET TO AMERICA'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET

FACT SHEET - FLORIDA

OCTOBER 2013

THE SITUATION - NATIONAL

Funding for social service programs is at an all-time low without relief in sight. At the same time, the number of people accessing these programs continues to rise. The Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, passed in January 2013, takes major steps to reduce the federal deficit by cutting federal spending by nearly \$1.6 trillion. These measures will reduce deficits by \$2.35 trillion by 2022. Additionally, BCA established a Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to create a plan to reduce deficits by another \$1.2 trillion over this period. Since this "Super Committee" was unable to reach an agreement, the "Sequestration" process then automatically mandated funding cuts of 85.3 billion in 2013 and \$109.3 billion in each year from 2014 to 2021. The non-defense budget cuts in 2013 total \$42.7 billion and impact several important programs and services for low-income individuals including Social Services Block Grant programs; Education programs; WIC; and Low-Income Housing Subsidies. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2011-2013)

WHO IS IMPACTED?

Public assistance programs offer vital support to the most vulnerable populations in American which include (US Census Bureau, 2011):

- Disadvantaged, low income families (146.4 million)
- Seniors (42 million) and Grandfamilies (6.7 million)
- Individuals with Disabilities (46 million)
- Chronic and/or critically ill (133 million)

WHAT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS ARE BEING IMPACTED?

The programs cut most severely include those vital support services for the nation's most vulnerable populations. The program categories impacted include (but are not limited to):

- **Food** – WIC, senior nutrition, food banks, etc.
- **Education** – IEP support, after-school programs, etc.
- **Legal** – Adoption and guardianship programs, etc.
- **Housing** – shelter, affordable housing, etc.
- **Social Supports** – family counseling, crisis outreach, etc.
- **Employment** – training, placement, etc.

THE SITUATION – THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Along with federal budget cuts, states are cutting budgets in several areas including public assistance and social safety net programs. The State of Florida resolved a \$21.1 billion shortfall in FY2010-2013 by cutting funding across multiple programs including: K-12 Education (\$502.8 million), and Higher Education (\$470.0 million). In FY 13 Florida's unemployment rate fell and its sales tax collections and consumer spending rose. State lawmakers approved an FY 2014 budget that increases K-12 public school funding by \$1.2 billion, including \$480 million for teacher pay raises that are tied to performance. State employees also received pay increase for the first time since 2006. Legislators approved an increase in the corporate income tax for 2,000 businesses, cutting recurring state revenues by \$19.7 million and eliminated the sales tax businesses pay on the purchase of machinery and equipment, cutting recurring state revenue by \$115.3 million. Lawmakers approved \$36.3 million to bring an estimated 750 individuals off of the waiting list and onto the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver program and they rejected both a state-based health exchange and Medicaid expansion for 1 million low-income adults in Florida. In addition to state budget cuts, federal budget cuts are going to put Florida's most vulnerable residents at higher risk for negative impacts. (Fiscal Survey of States, 2010-2012; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2010- 2013)

WHO IS IMPACTED?

Public assistance programs offer vital support to the most vulnerable populations in American which include (US Census Bureau, 2011):

- Disadvantaged, low income families (2.8 million)
- Seniors (3.3 million) and Grandfamilies (450,430)
- Individuals with Disabilities (2.4 million)
- Chronic and/or critically ill (7.9 million)

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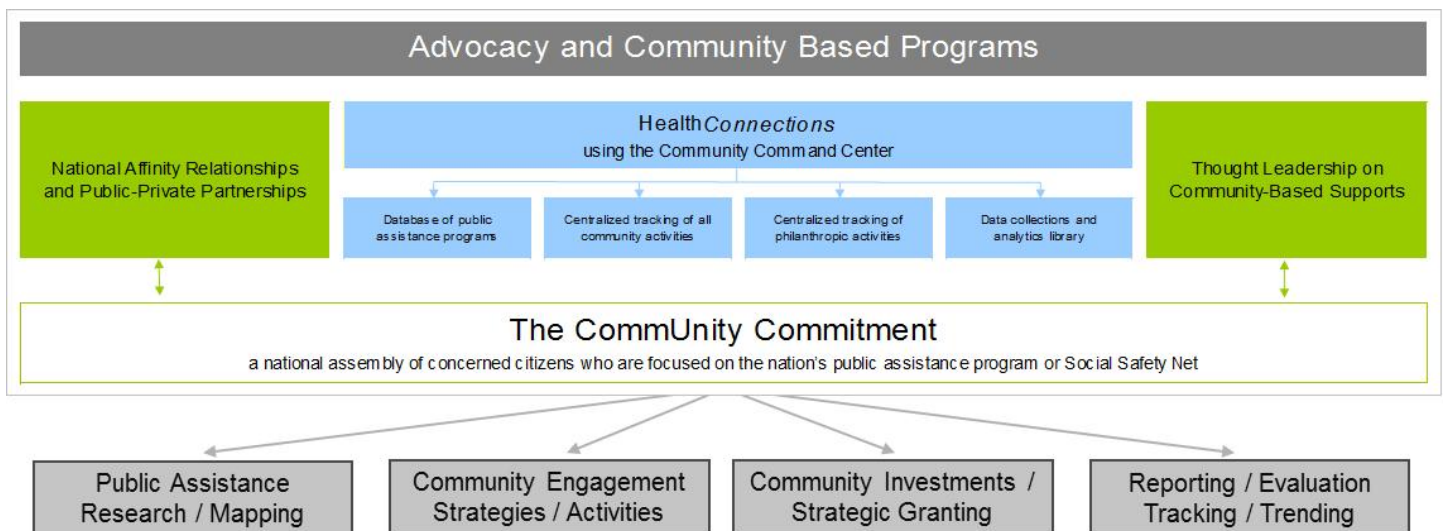
THE RESPONSE

The Social Safety Net is struggling amidst federal and state budget cuts and increased demand for assistance. While private funders have increased their efforts to support public assistance programs, the Social Safety Net is being stretched beyond its capacity. Public health stakeholders are working locally to create community-based solutions while advocates seek national changes to reinforce the fabric of public assistance programs.

The CommUnity Commitment is a national assembly of concerned citizens and organizations convened by WellCare Health Plans Inc. in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The focus of The CommUnity Commitment is to build a comprehensive Social Safety Net resource map through which gaps and risks for gaps are identified. Then, using a locally based community health planning council structure, The CommUnity Commitment focuses on adopting evidence-based community-identified methods for filling those gaps when the need is clearly quantified. The CommUnity Commitment is comprised of public health stakeholders, policymakers, employers and other business representatives as well as other community and civic leaders.

Additional action is required.

WellCare has created a dedicated department to focus on this issue and support The CommUnity Commitment in its efforts to provide a safety net to America's Social Safety Net. Through WellCare's Advocacy and Community Based Programs department, WellCare is focused on linking health outcomes with public health and quantify this positive impact this will help on our members and their communities to achieve a new level of industry collaboration: *Managed Public Health.*



Linking Social Services with Health Outcomes

- Assembling data on the social service network in all states (by zip code).
- Assessing the viability of the social service network in all states.
- Preparing resource analytics to identify social service gaps.
- Implementing community-based, gap-fill solutions.
- Measuring impact of social supports on health.