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Senator Barbara Sharief and Rep. Felicia Robinson File Bill to Improve Medicaid Access and Provider Accountability

Davie, FL – Florida State Senator Barbara Sharief (D-35) has filed **SB 40/HB 163 alongside Representative Felicia Robinson**, legislation aimed at improving access to care and accountability within Medicaid managed care plans. The bill requires plans to meet specific standards for the number, type, and regional distribution of providers, ensuring both adults and children have timely access to medical, dental, and behavioral health services.

The bill also requires that at least 50% of primary care providers offer appointments outside regular business hours including evenings, weekends, and state holidays and that plans maintain accurate, publicly accessible provider databases.

“Medicaid enrollees deserve timely, reliable access to healthcare,” said **Senator Barbara Sharief**. “This legislation holds managed care plans accountable and ensures that provider networks truly meet the needs of the communities they serve. By expanding access to evening, weekend, and holiday appointments, and requiring accurate, transparent provider information, we’re making it easier for families to get the care they need, when and where they need it. “

“Access to quality healthcare shouldn’t be a 9-to-5 privilege, especially for our working families and seniors who depend on Medicaid,” said **Representative Felicia Robinson**. “Far too often, families have to postpone vital care simply because they can’t get an appointment that fits their schedule. HB 163 is a commonsense measure that ensures our managed care system is truly managing care around the realities of people’s lives, not just the convenience of office hours. It’s about making healthcare work for the patient.”

If passed, SB 40/HB 163 will take effect **July 1, 2026**.

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