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Letters to the editor

DON'T CUT ELDERLY CARE

As a constituent and CEO of a long-term care facility in South Florida, I'm very concerned by the recently proposed budget cuts for Medicaid funding.

The Florida Senate has proposed an \$81 million cut, and the House has proposed a \$69 million cut to Medicaid funding. These cuts are unacceptable. They will almost certainly result in critical job cuts for nursing home staff, and they come at a time when our state's unemployment rate is at a record high.



Funding cuts mean less money to provide our residents the quality care they deserve. There is no way around it — caring for the elderly is a time-intensive service, and study after study has shown that reducing staffing levels has a direct impact on quality of care.

That's why it's so important that there is proper funding to provide adequate care for Florida's elderly population. Caring for our elderly is a fundamental expense, one that is not going away. It will continue to be an issue in Florida until we find a better long-term solution.

We may not like to think too much about it, but many of us — about one in four — will eventually receive care in a nursing home environment, either for rehabilitation or as a resident. For our community, for our parents or for ourselves, we ought to take a fresh look at how Florida provides funding for nursing home care.

Karen Kallen-Zury, CEO, Hollywood Hills Rehabilitation Center