

# Live Healthy Act to grow Florida's healthcare workforce



Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Live Healthy Act Thursday afternoon, which aims to grow the healthcare workforce.

By [Cody Butler](#)

Published: Mar. 21, 2024 at 3:42 PM EDT



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WCTV/Gray Florida Capital Bureau) - The state is now putting more resources into building up the healthcare industry and making it easier to find a doctor across Florida. Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Live Healthy Act Thursday afternoon, which aims to grow the healthcare workforce.

Florida is on track to be short about 18,000 doctors by 2035. And with roughly 1,000 people moving into the state every day, it can be hard to get in to see a doctor.

"That shortage is not getting better, it's getting worse," Dr. Alma Littles, FSU College of Medicine interim dean, said.

Growing up in rural Gadsden County, Littles knows the need for more doctors in underserved areas across the state.

"Around me, I was acutely aware of individuals both in my family, community, my church, etc. who did need healthcare and were not able to receive it," Dr. Littles said.

To reverse that trend, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Live Healthy Act into law during a news conference in Bonita Springs Thursday.

"Which is something that's important in a growing state. This is going to be needed. You're talking about underserved areas, you're talking about low-income areas," Gov. DeSantis said.

The Live Healthy Act does several things, including expanding several programs to attract more professionals and adding residency programs.

"We know that if we can have sufficient training programs in Florida, to train them in residency, we are likely to retain them in the State of Florida," Dr. Littles said.



Under this law, the state is also putting more money into a loan forgiveness program. Something Dr. Littles said will make a difference.

"We really believe that they're more likely to locate in those areas of greatest need in this state," Dr. Littles said.

The new law also creates a commission to award grants so healthcare centers can invest in technology, such as telehealth.

The legislature also passed several health-related bills this year, including expanding cancer screening coverage and sickle cell research. However, expanding Medicaid wasn't included in this legislative session.

*Copyright 2024 WCTV. All rights reserved.*