

## Oliva outlines health overhaul in opening speech

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In his 2019 legislative session opening remarks, House Speaker Jose Oliva focused heavily on health care reform, calling the current system a "five-alarm fire."

Oliva leans libertarian in a GOP-controlled state Legislature and has long sought to lower the cost of health care by introducing competition and breaking up hospital-controlled monopolies.

"Nothing is a great financial threat to the public and private coffers alike as is health care," Oliva said in remarks prepared for delivery today. "We spend almost more on health care than we do on all other things combined. Still, hundreds of thousands go without."

The state Legislature rejected Medicaid expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act, a move Oliva supported. The decision left roughly [400,000](#) people in a coverage gap — too poor to qualify for tax credits under federally subsidized Obamacare but ineligible for Medicaid.

"Many more struggle to afford ever-increasing insurance and medication cost," Oliva said. "The health care-industrial complex receives federal dollars, state dollars, local dollars, and private dollars, and still they need more. Pharmaceutical companies gouge Floridians for their medications, often ten times what the rest of the world pays, sometimes more."

He said he would seek "comprehensive" health care reform, including an overhaul of certificate of need programs, telehealth, scope of practice for nurses, health savings accounts, and price transparency.

He said he wants to ensure that patients will receive "accurate and binding estimates for their care" without offering details.

Oliva said he wants to lower drug prices, but he didn't elaborate on how. Gov. Ron DeSantis has proposed importing them from Canada and has often deferred to Oliva, an early campaign supporter, on health policy.