

# FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY®

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WEEK OF MARCH 12-18, 2014

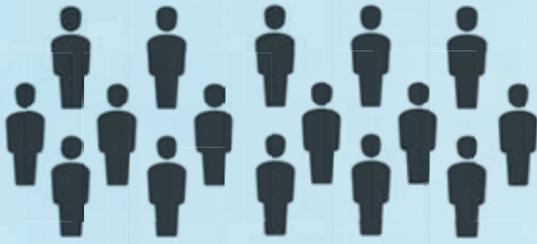
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BY THE NUMBERS

1.2

billion dollars that the state is turning down this year



25

percent of Floridians who are not insured



7

million dollars Florida is turning down every day from the federal government

## Medicaid expansion

Florida continues to say 'no' to the federal offer to help expand Medicaid, leaving the 'working poor' uninsured.

BY ROGER WILLIAMS

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IN FLORIDA, WHERE DEMOGRAPHERS EXPECT THE population to surpass New York's this month to position the state as the nation's third most populous, about one in four citizens lack medical insurance.

That rate of uninsured, at almost 25 percent, is the second highest in the United States, where each of the 50 states is grappling with the pressing need to change the way health care is delivered to all citizens — but especially to those who remain uninsured.

Political battles have been so clamorous that the point of it all may sometimes seem obscured. But there is a simple pragmatism, at bottom: Citizens with insurance tend to care for themselves before problems become dire. That costs less. Citizens without insurance, usually working people with low incomes, wait until they face emergencies. That costs more and they can't pay. Ultimately, businesses and individuals who pay for insurance

SEE MEDICAID, A8 |

## Permitting pooches: Working out a doggie dining ordinance

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

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Southwest Florida restaurants expand their customer base by welcoming dogs to porches and patios, and participating in events such as Pug Fest and Dog's Night Out.

But a quirk in state rules makes it technically illegal for many eateries, such as



those at the Bell Tower Shops in south Lee County, to accommodate canines outside.

Florida requires city and county governments to pass their own "dog dining ordinances" based on state guidelines. It generally requires restaurants to pay to renew a yearly permit. But since the rule is normally not enforced, some enti-

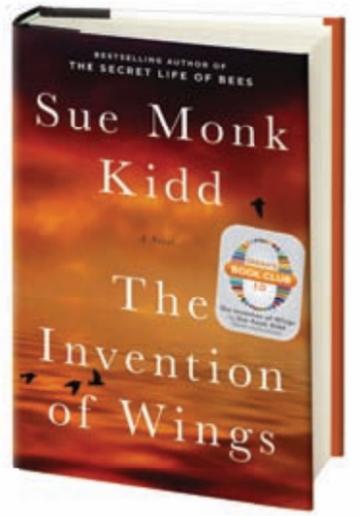
ties such as Lee County have not passed one.

"We were a little surprised to have a law like that on the books," said Jen Nettles, general manager at the Bell Tower Shops.

Concerned that their businesses might be subject to fines or be forced to turn away customers, the Bell Tower Shops worked with Lee County planners to create the ordinance. If approved by commissioners, it could go into effect by late spring

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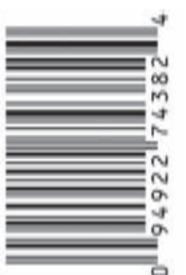


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