



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941 861-5344 fax 941 861-5987

**COPY**

March 4, 2015

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health  
State of Florida  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**RE: Primary Care Partnership**

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the Sarasota County Commission, I am providing our letter of support for the continuation of our successful public/private partnership with Community Health Centers of North Port, Inc. (CHCNP), a not-for-profit corporation, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). This partnership now serves more than 30,000 citizens per year at three health centers in Sarasota County, including the new Sally and Sam Shapiro Babies and Children's Medical Center.

Sarasota County enjoys a unique and highly effective relationship with DOH-Sarasota which has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years. In response to the growing number of uninsured and underinsured citizens, in 2008, CHCNP and DOH-Sarasota applied for and were designated a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). As a result, our partnership is now receiving almost \$2 million in federal funding.

DOH-Sarasota has developed a model for funding primary care for the uninsured and underinsured as well as high-risk patients that other providers will not accept. This funding model generates approximately \$17 million in revenue, relying on payments for services from Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, together with the \$2 million federal grant and a \$1.3 million County grant. The results of this partnership cannot be denied:

- 30,500 citizens received their primary care services in our clinics, including 13,700 children, 1000 pregnant women, many of them high-risk patients, and 1100 individuals who were homeless
- More than 37% had no insurance
- Almost 62% had family incomes at or below the federal poverty level
- More than 15% would be considered "working poor" families

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
March 4, 2015  
Page 2 of 2

Equally as impressive as the data is the broad array of services our citizens can access through our clinics, including pediatrics, Women's health, dental, pharmacy, laboratory, behavioral health, chronic disease management and social services. There are also certified counselors who can assist those without insurance to qualify for Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party insurance based on income.

The partnership between Sarasota County, DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP serves as the medical safety net for our citizens. The loss of this meaningful partnership would have a significant impact on our community and our citizens. We respectfully request that this partnership be allowed to continue in its current form.

Sincerely,



*(signed in her absence to avoid delay)*

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator  
Chuck Henry, Director, Department of Health - Sarasota



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

March 31, 2015

The Honorable Rick Scott  
Governor, State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of the Sarasota County Commission, I am asking for your support for the successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of North Port, Inc. (CHCNP), a not-for-profit corporation, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). Specifically we ask that the state continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to continue as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC, which will enable our successful partnership with CHCNP to remain while providing health care access for approximately 30,500 area citizens.

DOH-Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years. Our FQHC partnership with CHCNP began in 2008 in response to an increased need for these services to the county's underinsured and uninsured citizens. The FQHC now plays a key role in providing primary care services to this population. The profile of our FQHC's services is as follows:

- 30,500 Sarasota County citizens, including approximately 13,700 children and more than 1,000 pregnant women, received their primary care through this program
- 37.3% of these patients were uninsured, including adults below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who did not qualify for or could not afford health insurance
- 55.2% were covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program
- 61.8% had family incomes at 100% of the FPL or less; the FPL for a family of four in 2014 was \$23,850
- 15.2% had family incomes of more than 100% of FPL but less than 200% of FPL (often called "working poor")
- More than 1,100 individuals reported that they were homeless

Our FQHC provides primary health care services under board certified providers, which include: Adult health; Pediatrics; Women's health; Obstetrics/gynecology; Dental; Pharmacy; Lab; Social Services; Chronic disease case management; Behavioral health (outpatient mental health and substance abuse services); and counselors who help uninsured individuals and families find affordable health care.

The Honorable Rick Scott  
March 31, 2015  
Page 2

The FQHC partnership between DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP serves as the main safety-net for our citizens who, otherwise, would be unable to secure health care and related services. It is increasingly difficult for those on Medicare or Medicaid to find physicians willing to accept them as patients. Although it is likely that they will see an increase in emergency room visits for non-emergency illnesses, Sarasota Memorial Hospital has indicated they have no interest in assuming the role of our FQHC. Other private non-profit medical providers have indicated they do not have the capacity to absorb our large number of clients and even refer their most severe or complex cases to our FQHC.

The loss of this partnership would be significant to many of the most vulnerable citizens in our community. The funding model that sustains this FQHC does not impact state funding so we are perplexed as to why there would be such a strong desire to eliminate a needed medical service that is having a significant positive impact on the health of our citizens.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your leadership and service to our state.

Sincerely,



*(signed in her absence to avoid delay)*

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Sarasota County Legislative Delegation  
Thomas A. Harner, County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator  
Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations



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1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

May 12, 2015

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD FACS  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health  
State of Florida  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**RE: Primary Care Partnership**

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On March 4, 2015, I wrote to you on behalf of the Sarasota County Commission expressing our support of the continuation of our successful Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) public/private partnership with Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH – Sarasota). We remain in strong support of such. The service to over 30,000 citizens per year is of critical concern to the Commission. This model has worked extraordinarily well for many years here in Sarasota County.

On April 17, 2015, Deputy Secretary Kim Barnhill attended the joint meeting of the Sarasota and Charlotte County Commissions. One of the items on our agenda was a discussion of the FQHC. As you know, Charlotte County is a close partner of Sarasota County. We frequently share regional and local concerns, including FQHC (see attached March 10, 2015 letter from Charlotte County Commission Chairman, Bill Truex). Moreover, the Charlotte County Commissioners have first-hand experience with the exit of their Health Department from primary care last year which was not seamless nor smooth. In fact, Charlotte County is still struggling with the private agencies which attempted to fill the primary care gap; unfortunately, the Commissioners have little influence and no control over the agencies and their efforts. Many of their citizens come to our FQHC for help.

We very much appreciated Deputy Secretary Barnhill's attendance and discussion with our two Commissions. The Sarasota County Commission stressed to her our serious concerns over the communications to DOH – Sarasota to reach out to private entities that may be interested in accessing federal dollars and providing primary care services. In our discussion with Deputy Secretary Barnhill, both Sarasota and Charlotte County Commissioners expressed concern over this issue, noting that in spite of her assurance that any transition would be "seamless", the experiences of other counties, including Charlotte County, have shown otherwise. This greatly concerns us.

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD FACS

May 12, 2015

Page: 2

As we noted previously, and with Deputy Secretary Barnhill, the FQHC partnership between DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP is a safety-net for our citizens who otherwise would be unable to secure health care, or find physicians willing to accept Medicare or Medicaid. Moreover, we believe the quality of care received by our citizens, from shorter wait times to responsive staff, is considerably better than that in other counties which have had to make this transition.

In Sarasota County, we have met that challenge and exceeded expectations by partnering with our Sarasota Health Department. Their pull-out from primary care leaves us with few workable choices. Yet the State Health Department continues to insist there are private, nonprofit agencies that will be able to provide the same services and the transition will be seamless. Beyond these words, what will the State Health Department agree to do to assist Sarasota County if these assurances do not materialize? In other words how will the State Health Department guarantee that those that are currently getting service will continue to receive them under the new model?

I look forward to your response. As noted previously, the FQHC partnership model that we have used in Sarasota County for many years works very well. On behalf of the Sarasota County Commission I ask that the state continue to allow DOH – Sarasota to serve as the fiscal agent and medical provider for our FQHC and enable our demonstrated successful partnership with CHCNP to remain intact. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

Attachments: March 4, 2015 letter from Sarasota County Commission  
March 10, 2015 letter from Charlotte County Commission

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Bill Truex, Chairman, Charlotte County Commission  
Brandon Arrington, Chairman, Osceola County Commission



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1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

June 17, 2015

Office of Governor Rick Scott  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

**RE: Primary Care Partnership**

Dear Governor Scott:

On March 4, 2015 and again on May 12, I wrote to Dr. Armstrong, Surgeon General on behalf of the Sarasota County Commission expressing our support of the continuation of our successful Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) public/private partnership with Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH – Sarasota). To date, we have not received any written acknowledgement or response to these letters. On June 9, we did receive a letter from Deputy Secretary Kim Barnhill which seemed to provide some positive information. However, the overriding theme of the letter remains the same: Dismantle Sarasota County's successful primary care system.

Our local primary health care system is provided based on a sound financial plan. Of the \$17 million in revenue that funds our system, \$13 million is third party payments, primarily from Medicare and Medicaid. However, our Affordable Care Act grant of almost \$2 million is a key component of our financial plan. This grant expires in April 2016 and the application for continuation of the grant will be due this fall. DOH-Sarasota must begin preparing the lengthy and detailed application now in order to meet the anticipated deadline.

However, until Ms. Barnhill's June 9 letter, we had not received any assurances that DOH-Sarasota would be allowed to apply for this grant again. Thankfully, Ms. Barnhill's letter indicates that "in the event that an acceptable partner is not identified, the Department will reapply for the FQHC grant". This good news is quickly followed by the reminder that the Department will "continue to seek transition opportunities".

No alternate provider has stepped forward to assume the role of DOH-Sarasota in our primary health care system. Any agency that might have the potential to do so, would need to be vetted by the Board of County Commissioners, commit to continuing the current standard of care and then be provided time to mobilize for the transition. That said, even if an alternate provider was available, Sarasota County has no desire to undertake such an unnecessary change process when

the current system provided by our partners is second-to-none. The Board of County Commissioners remains committed to our local primary health care model. We do not wish to see our citizens suffer through a transition (as other counties have) when there is no viable or meaningful alternative and no sound reason to abandon our extremely successful model.

The primary health care partnership model that we have in Sarasota County for many years works very well. There is no evidence that DOH-Sarasota has or ever will lose focus on population health care because of their partnership with Sarasota County to deliver primary care. Attached for your information is a fact sheet we have prepared that outlines our program and related concerns in greater detail.

We would sincerely appreciate your support of our successful model by authorizing DOH-Sarasota to apply for continuation of our federal grant any by putting to rest the continuing discussions about dismantling and transitioning our services. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



*(signed in her absence to avoid delay)*

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator  
Chuck Henry, Director, Department of Health – Sarasota



**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

2015 JUL 20 PM 2 33

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SARASOTA, FL

July 14, 2015

Ms. Carolyn J. Mason, Chair  
Sarasota Board of County Commissioners  
1660 Ringling Boulevard  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

**EMAILED TO:**  
**EACH COMMISSIONER**  
*County Administrator*

Dear Chair Mason:

Thank you for your letter expressing support and appreciation of the work the Florida Department of Health (the Department) does as part of the public/private partnership between the Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) and the Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). We, too, are proud and appreciative of that service to your community; however must reiterate the Department's unique role and responsibilities for public health.

The Florida Department of Health is a statewide integrated system of public health service comprised of local health departments representing all 67 counties and a centralized state office supporting those local efforts. Like all state agencies the department constantly seeks to identify opportunities to avoid or eliminate duplicative services. This includes services that may be performed by the private sector, freeing up state resources to focus on our primary mission of population health. Currently all local health departments that operate Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) throughout the state are working to transition the responsibility of primary care to other private - not for profit entities.

As indicated in previous correspondence, we stand by our commitment to support a transition process to an agency or board which will maintain primary care services at no less than their current levels throughout the county and will ensure no gaps in the provision of those services. Understandably, the chosen entity should be one acceptable to the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners in order to maintain its solid partnership with primary care and ensure long-term benefits for your community. We understand that the current co-applicant (CHCSC) may be interested in applying as a private not-for-profit entity if provided both support and time for a smooth transition process.

To allow such a transition, and being committed to the cooperation between local and state governments, the Department is supportive of a process that is completed by the end of the next three-year HRSA grant cycle. With the CHCSC as the successful applicant, DOH-Sarasota may continue to provide primary care and support services through contractual arrangements as needed during the transition period while the CHCSC strengthens its capacity and ability to fully operate the FQHC.

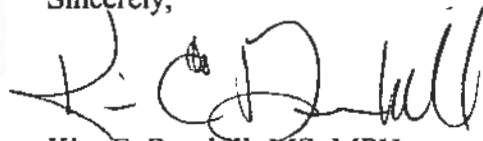
As stated in previous letters, if the CHCSC is not ready to apply and another acceptable entity is not identified then DOH-Sarasota will reapply for the three-year HRSA grant. Please know that this option is

considered to be least desirable as it could prevent your community from seeking additional federal funds which may easily exceed one million dollars over the three year grant period.

We continue to encourage you to help DOH-Sarasota and the CHCSC to identify viable community partners and actively participate in the development of a plan that is protective of your community's health care needs and current levels of service. The need to transition primary care services away from DOH-Sarasota within the upcoming grant period remains firm to allow the Department to focus its resources on our core public health mission.

RECEIVED  
COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEMS  
DEPT. SECRETARY

Sincerely,



Kim E. Barnhill, MS, MPH  
Deputy Secretary for County Health Systems

cc: Chuck Henry, Health Officer, DOH-Sarasota



March 10, 2015

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health  
State of Florida  
5042 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

2015 MAR 17 PM 9 01  
BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS  
SARASOTA, FL

**RE: Primary Care Partnership**

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the Charlotte County Commission, I am writing you to provide our letter of support for the continuation of the successful public/private partnership between the Community Health Centers of North Port (CHCNP) a not for profit corporation, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). You may be asking why Charlotte County is taking such an interest in this issue and I am happy to address that question herein.

The partnership that currently serves more than 30,000 citizens per year in Sarasota County at their three health centers also affects residents of the Englewood area (Sarasota and Charlotte Counties) and Port Charlotte (Charlotte County). Since the elimination of primary care and the activation of the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), Charlotte County has experienced extra pressures on the two free clinics in operation, Englewood Care Clinic (Englewood) and the Virginia B. Andes Clinic in Port Charlotte. Though the volunteers continue to strive to serve everyone, they cannot always see every patient. The only FQHC in Charlotte County is located in the southern end of the county making it difficult for patients to get there. I have had several joint meetings with the DOH-Charlotte, DOH-Sarasota, Commissioner Christine Robinson, Sarasota County and representatives of the Englewood Care Clinic to try and resolve the issue of under servicing our community. We have tried to provide additional means of transportation but the avenue most selected has been to take advantage of the CHCNP.

DOH-Sarasota has developed a model for funding primary care for the uninsured and underinsured as well as high risk patients that providers will not accept. They have willingly assisted those in our community that have fallen through the cracks. This funding model generates approximately \$17 million in revenue, relying on payments for services from Medicaid, Medicare and the Children's Health Insurance Program, together with the \$2 million federal grant and a \$1.3 million County grant. The partnership the CHCNP and the DOH-Sarasota has been a godsend for those that are underserved in both Sarasota and Charlotte Counties.

- 30,500 citizens received their primary care services in the 3 clinics, including 13,700 children,  
1,000 pregnant women, many of them high risk patients and 1,100 individuals who were homeless
- More than 37% had no insurance
- Nearly 62% had family incomes at or below the federal poverty level
- More than 15% would be considered "working poor" families

The partnership that exists between Sarasota County, DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP serves as the medical safety net for the citizens of Sarasota County and a portion of Charlotte County. The loss of this meaningful partnership would have significant impact on both of our communities. We respectfully request that this partnership be allowed to continue in its current form, allowing it to continue to serve those citizens already underserved in Sarasota and Charlotte Counties.

Kind Regards,



*Bill Truex, Chairman 2014/2015*

Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners

BT/dmg/#15-12

CC: Mr. Chuck Henry, Director, Sarasota County Department of Health  
Dr. Henry Kurban, Director, Charlotte County Department of Health  
The Honorable Sarasota County Commissioners  
Mr. Thomas Harmer, Sarasota County Administrator  
The Honorable Charlotte County Commissioners  
Mr. Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County Administrator



# TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY

*Incorporated November 14, 1955*

**Town Hall**  
501 Bay Isles Road  
Longboat Key, Florida 34228-3196  
(941) 316-1999  
SUNCOM 516-2760  
Fax (941) 316-1656  
www.longboatkey.org

March 23, 2015

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health  
State of Florida  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Sarasota County Primary Care Partnership

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the Town of Longboat Key Town Commission, I am writing to express our support for continuation of Sarasota County public/private partnership with Community Health Centers of North Port, Inc. (CHCNP), a not-for-profit corporation, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). This successful partnership serves more than 30,000 citizens per year at three health centers in Sarasota County and has provided primary care services to the community for more than 35 years.

In response to the growing number of uninsured and underinsured citizens, in 2008, CHCNP and DOH-Sarasota applied for and were designated a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). As a result, that partnership is now receiving almost \$2 million in Federal funding.

DOH-Sarasota has developed a model for funding primary care for the uninsured and underinsured as well as high-risk patients that other providers will not accept. This funding model generates approximately \$17 million in revenue, relying on payments for services from Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, together with the \$2 million Federal grant and a \$1.3 million County grant. The results of this partnership are impressive.

- 30,500 citizens received their primary care services in the clinics, including 13,700 children, 1000 pregnant women, many of them high-risk patients, and 1100 homeless individuals.
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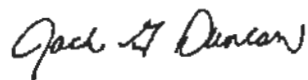
BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS  
SARASOTA, FL

- More than 15% would be considered "working poor" families

The expansive list of services available include pediatrics, women's health, dental, pharmacy, laboratory, behavioral health, chronic disease management and social services. There are also certified counselors who can assist those without insurance to qualify for Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party insurance based on income.

The partnership between Sarasota County, DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP serves as the medical safety net for a significant population. The loss of this meaningful partnership would have a significant impact on the community and citizens it currently serves. The Longboat Key Town Commission urges you to allow this partnership to continue in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,



Jack G. Duncan,  
Mayor

cc: Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners



# City of North Port

Rhonda Y. DiFranco, Mayor  
Jacqueline Moore, Vice-Mayor  
Cheryl Cook, Commissioner  
Tom Jones, Commissioner  
Linda Yates, Commissioner

**CITY COMMISSION**  
4970 City Hall Boulevard  
North Port, Florida 34296-4100 Tel: (941) 429-7000  
Fax: (941) 429-7008  
[www.cityofnorthport.com](http://www.cityofnorthport.com)

April 13, 2015

Dr. John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health  
State of Florida  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

RE: Sarasota County Primary Care Partnership

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the City of North Port Commission, I am writing to express our support for continuation of Sarasota County public/private partnership with Community Health Centers of North Port, Inc. (CHCNP), a not-for-profit corporation, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). This successful partnership serves more than 30,000 citizens per year at three health centers in Sarasota County and has provided primary care services to the community for more than 35 years.

In response to the growing number of uninsured and underinsured citizens, in 2008, CHCNP and DOH-Sarasota applied for and were designated a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). As a result, that partnership is now receiving almost \$2 million in Federal funding.

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The expansive list of services available include pediatrics, women's health, dental, pharmacy, laboratory, behavioral health, chronic disease management and social services. There are also certified counselors who can assist those without insurance to qualify for Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party insurance based on income.

The partnership between Sarasota County, DOH-Sarasota and the CHCNP serves as the medical safety net for a significant population. The loss of this meaningful partnership would have a significant impact on the community and citizens it currently serves. The City of North Port Commission urges you to allow this partnership to continue in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Y. DiFranco  
Mayor

cc: Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners



**Community  
Health Centers  
of Sarasota County**

*Providing quality health services and promoting wellness & prevention*

**COMMUNITY  
HEALTH CENTERS  
OF SARASOTA  
COUNTY**

**BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS**

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*Beverly Hindenlang, DNP  
Vice Chair*

*Maurzen Coble,  
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*Irene Fleshner,  
RN.MHSA*

**Chief Executive  
Officer**

*Linda L. Stone, PhD*

September 28, 2015

Deputy Secretary Kim Barnhill  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin # A00  
Tallahassee, Florida, 32399 -0700

Dear Deputy Secretary Barnhill:

I write to you as Chair of the Board of The Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC), with authority from the CHCSC Board. CHCSC has voted to work diligently toward assuming responsibility for the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) no later than December 31, 2017, with the goal of doing so in partnership with Sarasota County and the Florida Department of Health- Sarasota in Sarasota County (DOH-S).

The CHCSC Board's goal is to transition from joint governance of FQHC services between the DOH-S and CHCSC Board under their current co-applicant agreement to sole governance by the CHCSC Board. This transition from a co-applicant arrangement to one where the FQHC is a free-standing entity will preserve the integrity of Sarasota's safety-net system of care if we can continue our partnership with Sarasota County Government and DOH-S. Our intention is to work towards a Memorandum of Understanding with each of our valued partners.

The CHCSC Board has reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and strongly believes, as does Sarasota County Government, that there is no acceptable entity to take over the exceptional care currently being provided to our residents through our co-applicant relationship with the DOH-S. Therefore, per your July 14, 2015 letter to Sarasota County Commissioner Mason, the CHCSC Board requests that the DOH-S be allowed, as co-applicant with the CHCSC Board, to apply for the HRSA Service Area Competition grant due December 2, 2015, and accept HRSA funding. This grant is critical to our FQHC's continued success and stability.

We ask for the State's support and cooperation as we work through the educational process and numerous details involved in this transition. Together with Sarasota County Government and DOH-S, we want to ensure our more than 30,000 residents see little or no change in the quality of health care they receive. By working together, we can analyze, discuss and approach the many tasks before us with shared goals and responsibilities.

Cordially,

  
Christine R. Sensenig, Board Chair  
On behalf of the Board of The Community Health Centers of Sarasota County

cc: Dr. Linda Stone, Executive Director and the CHCSC Board  
Carolyn Mason, Chair, Sarasota County Commission and the entire Commission  
Chuck Henry, Health Officer, DOH Sarasota  
Tom Harmer, Sarasota County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator

2200 Ringling Boulevard  
Sarasota, Florida 34237

Phone: 941-861-2954  
Fax: 941-861-2837  
E-mail: linda.stone@flhealth.gov





**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

John H. Armstrong, M.D., FACS  
State Surgeon General  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-00  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700

October 14, 2015

Dear Dr. Armstrong:

On behalf of the Sarasota County Commission, we are writing you regarding Deputy Secretary Kim Barnhill's letter of July 14, 2015. We remain concerned by the effort to dismantle the long-standing, highly successful partnership between the Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota), Sarasota County Government and the Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC).

Our success is a state and national model for providing meaningful, cost-effective health care for more than 30,000 citizens who are uninsured or underinsured. The DOH-Sarasota is a trusted and vital member of our team and its services are second to none. Contrary to Ms. Barnhill's concern that DOH-Sarasota services are duplicative, there is no nonprofit provider that has proposed to assume their role. Even if there were a potential provider, it is unlikely that provider could meet and maintain the high level of service currently provided to our citizens by DOH-Sarasota.

The CHCSC Board of Directors has wisely determined that it is not feasible for them to be the sole applicant for our federal grant in the short time left before the application is due. Therefore, consistent with the July 14 letter from Ms. Barnhill, we assume that DOH-Sarasota has been authorized to prepare and submit the joint federal grant application with the CHCSC on or before December 2, 2015. Please let us know right away if this is not the situation.

Per the attached letter, we also know that the CHCSC Board of Directors has committed to thoroughly vetting and understanding the legal, financial, medical and organizational implications of being the lead agency for our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). They expect to accomplish this no later than December 31, 2017. The County Commission finds this to be a very generous act by a nonprofit board composed of volunteers, many with full-time jobs and 50% of whom are required to be consumers of the FQHC services. We recognize that this offer comes from a sincere concern for our 30,000 vulnerable citizens and a deep respect for the work that is being done every day by the health care professionals and staff of the FQHC.

While we continue to insist this transition is unnecessary and disruptive, we know that the CHCSC Board is approaching their effort in good faith. We intend to support their efforts and we hope the State will do the same. The ability of this Board to succeed will largely depend on its ability to subcontract with DOH-Sarasota; otherwise, the costs of meeting the current standard of care could skyrocket and cutbacks to our level of service would be necessary. That would truly be unfortunate for the citizens of Sarasota County who depend on our services and for the model that is an example of how true collaboration can yield amazing results.

Sincerely,

Carolyn J. Mason, Chair

Attachment

- c: Sarasota County Commission
- Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator
- Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator
- Chuck Henry, Director, Department of Health - Sarasota



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
"Dedicated to Quality Service"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Jim Boyd  
State Representative, District 71  
322 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Boyd:

It was a pleasure to see you at the recent Legislative Delegation meeting. Congratulations to you for your successful two years as Chairman. We also thank you very much for your interest and support of our current model for providing primary care services to over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOH-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill)

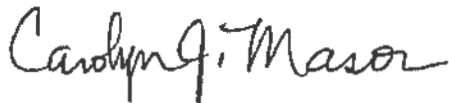
While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair). We would appreciate your support as well.

The Honorable Jim Boyd  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,



Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

**Attachments (2)**

- c:     **Sarasota County Commission**  
          **Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator**  
          **Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator**  
          **Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations**



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Nancy Detert  
State Senator, District 28  
416 Senate Office Building  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Senator Detert:

I trust this letter finds you well. We wanted to thank you very much for your past interest and support of our current model for providing primary care services to over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

As you know Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOF-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill).

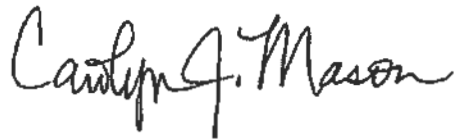
While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair). We would appreciate your support as well.

The Honorable Nancy Detert  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn J. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

Attachments (2)

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator  
Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations



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"Dedicated to Quality Service"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Ray Pilon  
State Representative, District 72  
412 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Pilon:

It was a pleasure to see you at the recent Legislative Delegation meeting. Congratulations on your selection as Chairman. We also thank you very much for your interest and support of our current model for providing primary care services to over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOH-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill).

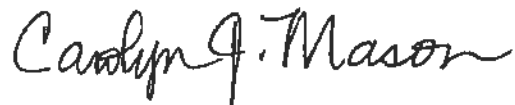
While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair) We would appreciate your support as well.

The Honorable Ray Pilon  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn J. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

Attachments (2)

c:     **Sarasota County Commission**  
       **Thomas A. Harner, County Administrator**  
       **Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator**  
       **Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations**



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1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable W. Gregory "Greg" Steube  
State Representative, District 73  
204 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Steube:

I trust this letter finds you well. We wanted to thank you very much for your past interest and support of our current model for providing primary care services to over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

As you know Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOH-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill).

While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair). We would appreciate your support as well.



The Honorable W. Gregory "Greg" Steube  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn J. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

Attachments (2)

c:     **Sarasota County Commission**  
          **Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator**  
          **Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator**  
          **Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations**



**SARASOTA COUNTY**

*"Dedicated to Quality Service"*

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236

phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Julio Gonzalez  
State Representative, District 74  
1301 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Gonzalez:

It was a pleasure to see you at the recent Legislative Delegation meeting. Congratulations on your selection as Vice-Chairman. We also thank you very much for your personal support and engagement on the issue of the primary care services model that currently provides care for over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

As you know Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOH-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill).

While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair). We would appreciate your support as well.

The Honorable Julio Gonzalez  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn J. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

**Attachments (2)**

c:     **Sarasota County Commission**  
          **Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator**  
          **Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator**  
          **Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations**



**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
*"Dedicated to Quality Service"*

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1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236  
phone 941-861-5344 fax 941-861-5987

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Darryl Rouson  
State Representative, District 70  
212 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Representative Rouson:

I trust this letter finds you well. We wanted to thank you very much for your past interest and support of our current model for providing primary care services to over 30,000 citizens. It is very much appreciated.

As you know Sarasota County's model is a very successful Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) public/private partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC) a not-for-profit corporation and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota (DOH-Sarasota). It has existed since 2008. In fact, Sarasota has been providing primary care services to our community for more than 35 years.

Over the past several months the county has asked the state to continue to allow DOH-Sarasota to serve as fiscal agent and medical provider for the FQHC for this exceptionally well working model. Allowing such would enable our partnership with CHCSC to remain in place while providing health care access for citizens.

In further response to the issue CHCSC, has written to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill noting that they have reviewed and examined other potential partnerships and determined there is no acceptable entity to take over such care. They have asked to be allowed to reapply with DOH-Sarasota for federal funds. (See attached September 28, 2015 letter from CHCSC Chair to DOH Deputy Secretary Barnhill).

While we insist such a transition is unnecessary and disruptive the county appreciates the good faith in which CHCSC has approached this issue. Our Commission approved the attached letter to Dr. Armstrong, State Surgeon General. (See attached October 14, 2015 letter from County Commission Chair). We would appreciate your support as well.

The Honorable Darryl Rouson  
October 14, 2015  
Page 2

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important community wide issue. If you or your staff have questions, or need information please continue to call upon the Rob Lewis. He can be reached at (941) 444-9532.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn J. Mason". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn J. Mason  
Chair

Attachments (2)

c: Sarasota County Commission  
Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Lee Ann Lowery, Assistant County Administrator  
Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Ray Pilon*

District 72

**District Office:**

1660 Ringling Blvd. #310  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
(941) 955-8077  
(941) 373-7452 (fax)

**Tallahassee Office:**

412 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 717-5072

Email: [ray.pilon@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:ray.pilon@myfloridahouse.gov)

October 15, 2015

John H. Armstrong, M.D., FACS  
State Surgeon General  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-00  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Dear Dr. Armstrong,

On behalf of the Sarasota County Commission, I am writing you regarding Deputy Secretary Kim Barnhill's letter of July 14, 2015. I remain concerned by the effort to dismantle the long-standing, highly successful partnership between the Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota), Sarasota County Government and the Community Health Centers of Sarasota County, Inc. (CHCSC).

Their success is a state and national model for providing meaningful, cost-effective health care for more than 30,000 citizens who are uninsured or underinsured. The DOH-Sarasota is a trusted and vital member of our community and its services are second to none.

The CHCSC Board of Directors has wisely determined that is not feasible for them to be the sole applicant for their federal grant. Therefore, consistent with the July 14 letter from Ms. Barnhill, I anticipate that DOH-Sarasota has been authorized to prepare and submit a joint federal grant application with the CHCSC on or before December 2, 2015.

I am aware that the CHCSC Board of Directors has committed to thoroughly vetting and understanding the legal, financial, medical and organizational implications of being the lead agency for the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). They expect to

**Committees:** Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, *Vice Chair*;  
Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee;  
Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee; State Affairs Committee

accomplish this no later than December 31, 2017. The Sarasota County Commission thinks this is a very generous act by a nonprofit board composed of volunteers, many with full time jobs and 50% of whom are required to be consumers of FQHC services. I understand that this offer comes from a sincere concern for our 30,000 vulnerable citizens and a deep respect for the work that is being done every day by the health care professionals and staff of FQHC and I support their request for apply jointly for the federal grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Pilon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ray" being more prominent than the last name "Pilon".

Representative Ray Pilon

cc: Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator  
Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community/Intergovernmental Relations