

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Health and Human Services

TO: Sarasota County Commission
THROUGH: Thomas A. Harmer, County Administrator
FROM: Charles H. Henry, MPA, Director, Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Robert R. Lewis, Director, Community and Intergovernmental Relations
DATE: April 19, 2017
SUBJECT: Update on Department of Health, Federally Qualified Health Centers

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S) OR ACTION(S):

Update on Department of Health Federally Qualified Health Centers.

BACKGROUND:

Sarasota County's Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) is a partnership between the Florida Department of Health-Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) and the nonprofit, Community Health Center of Sarasota County (CHCSC). DOH-Sarasota serves as the medical services provider.

In 2015, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) directed that those health departments that provided primary care were not to renew their federal Affordable Care Act grants and were to withdraw from primary care services. Subsequently, the Board authorized an aggressive advocacy effort seeking State approval for the retention of the current model.

In November 2015, staff reported that Sarasota County was given approval to apply for another three-year period of Federal Affordable Care Act grants.

On December 2, 2015, DOH-Sarasota reapplied for the grant and was advised on April 15, 2016, of the acceptance of the grant. The current grant period ends on April 30, 2019.

On August 17, 2016, Sarasota County administration and intergovernmental staff met with the Secretary and Surgeon General, Dr. Celeste Philip. Staff stressed that Sarasota County's model is a very successful example of a FQHC public/private partnership. The Surgeon General indicated there would be no pressure to meet a predetermined deadline and no concern with an arrangement that would allow the CHCSC to contract back with DOH Sarasota.

RELEVANT PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

1. March 3, 2015 – the Board directed the County Administrator to draft a letter to the State Surgeon General supporting continuance of the FQHC (5-0 vote).
2. March 3, 2015 – the Board directed the County Administrator to draft a letter to the Charlotte County Commission regarding possible loss of FQHC in Sarasota County (5-0 vote).

3. March 17, 2015 – the Board requested the Chair to send a letter of thanks to Charlotte County for sending a letter to the DOH Surgeon General regarding FQHC.
4. April 17, 2015 – the Board discussed the FQHC with the Charlotte County Commission and the former DOH Deputy Secretary.
5. October 13, 2015 – the Board approved the Chair to send a letter to the State Surgeon General related to the Community Health Centers of Sarasota County and requested the County Administrator prepare a transmittal letter of such along with thanks to the legislative delegation for support.
6. November 3, 2015 –in a joint meeting with Charlotte County Commission, the Board discussed a staff update regarding DOH approval to reapply for the next cycle of federal grants.
7. October 19, 2016 – in a joint meeting with Charlotte County Commission, the Board discussed a staff update that the local health office is working along with Community Health Centers of Sarasota County on a transition plan that would be based on meeting current service levels. The evolution of the program is expected to include a contracting relationship for certain services to be provided by DOH-Sarasota.

OUTREACH:

Since the initial communication from the state in spring 2015, County staff has continued an aggressive advocacy effort seeking allowance to continue the existing FQHC program. County intergovernmental relations staff has coordinated multiple meetings with State Legislative delegation members, DOH-Sarasota staff and the Secretary of DOH.

Multiple letters were sent by the Charlotte and Sarasota County Commissions to the Surgeon General and Governor urging the state to allow the County to continue in the successful model of providing primary care through a FQHC. In addition, letters of support were sent by state legislative members, the Town of Longboat Key, and the City of North Port. Staff has continued to keep the state legislative delegation members updated.

PROCUREMENT ACTION:

N/A

ANALYSIS/NEXT STEPS:

DOH-Sarasota and CHCSC have engaged a consultant and are preparing for a transition of the FQHC grant from DOH-Sarasota to the CHCSC, with a target date of December 2017. Based on initial recommendations from the consultant, the plan will include the evaluation of resource-sharing opportunities and a plan to contract with DOH-Sarasota to ensure the continuity of primary care service during a two-year transition period. DOH-Sarasota and the CHCSC will continue to respond to inquiries and discuss potential collaborations with community partners, including the Charlotte County Health Department and/or Charlotte County Government.

The mutually cooperative relationship and commitment between the CHSCS, DOH-Sarasota and the County provides a solid base to strengthen their current collaboration and explore new ways to improve the County's health care safety net.

FUNDING:

The current funding model provides \$19 million in revenues from the following sources:

1. \$1.5 million from Sarasota County
2. \$2.1 million from the Federal Affordable Care Act
3. \$1.3 million from the State of Florida (state primary care funding & ACHA ER Diversion grant)
4. Payments from third-party insurers (primarily Medicaid and Medicare).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. FQHC Power Point

Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Update

- FQHC is a long-standing partnership between Community Health Centers of Sarasota County (CHCSC) and DOH-Sarasota to provide primary care services
- In 2015, DOH advised that local DOH offices that provided primary care were not to renew federal ACA grants
- Sarasota County Commission authorized aggressive advocacy, seeking State approval to retain current model; Charlotte expressed support for Sarasota County program
- In fall 2015, approval was received to renew FQHC grant to allow time to consider transition options
- Current grant period ends April 30, 2019

FQHC Update

- Aug. 2016 - staff met with Florida DOH Secretary; Surgeon General indicated there was no pressure to meet predetermined transition deadline; no concern allowing CHCSC to contract with DOH-Sarasota
- CHCSC and DOH-Sarasota have engaged consultant to transition grant from DOH-Sarasota to CHCSC by Dec. 2017; this includes evaluation of service contracts and resource-sharing opportunities for transition period
- CHCSC and DOH-Sarasota will continue to meet with DOH-Charlotte to discuss potential collaborations with DOH-Charlotte and/or Charlotte County Government