



City of North Port

Rhonda Y. DiFranco, Mayor
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CITY COMMISSION

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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.

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.
- 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

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

DRAFT