



Lee Health has served as the safety net hospital system providing essential care for the residents of Southwest Florida for 105 years! Today, Lee Health provides an array of specialized programs and services that extend well beyond the walls of our respective acute care hospitals. Our facilities and providers primarily serve our five-county region of Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. Lee Health is the largest employer in Southwest Florida, employing more than 14,000 staff that provide care for nearly 2 million patients visits each year. The system's six hospitals include a Level II Trauma Center, Regional Cancer Center, and the Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida.

Lee Health is the nation's largest public health system to operate without collecting or receiving any form of direct local tax support. We are a mission driven organization that exists to serve the health and well-being of Southwest Florida. The system is dedicated to meeting the health care needs of all residents whether or not they can pay for their care. Lee Health delivers exceptional care during pandemics, hurricanes, and every day of the week, 365 days per year no matter the challenge. We are caring people, inspiring health!

YOUR COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Return on Investment

- Lee Health is a valuable member of our community, contributing hundreds of millions of dollars annually in community benefit for services such as unreimbursed government-sponsored programs, community education, prevention, and outreach. In 2020 Lee Health provided \$209 million in total community benefit and \$140 million less the benefit of taxes. Lee Health provides valuable return on investment for taxpayers.

COVID-19 Response Continues to Save Lives

- The frontline heroes that work at Lee Health stand resolute and continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. They have saved countless lives while treating those who contracted COVID-19. We owe these heroes a great debt of gratitude for their service!
- Lee Health took proactive measures to preserve our resources and position for recovery. Cost-saving labor reductions without layoffs, suspending capital projects, ending consulting agreements, freezing merit increases, reducing pay for senior staff, and permanent reductions in purchased services all played an important part in getting through these very difficult times.
- These proactive measures along with government assistance allowed our teams to never stop working to deliver exceptional care throughout the pandemic. We have been able to reward our medical teams with bonuses and restorative pay increases after we emerged from the darkest days of the pandemic.
- As variants surge, our teams must continue to show up and save lives every day. Please get vaccinated if you haven't already!

Behavioral Healthcare Access

- The United States and the State of Florida are experiencing a behavioral crisis that requires immediate action in order to stem this alarming trend. The growth in demand for pediatric and adult behavioral health interventions in SWFL over the past four years has well exceeded our collective ability to treat those in need.
- The specific items outlined below, such as abolishing the requirement for "prior authorization" to obtain Medicaid behavioral health service will help address this problem.

- Lee Health took proactive measures to preserve our resources and position for recovery.
- Codify Covid-19 Emergency Order authority allowing for expanded telehealth utilization, including for behavioral health services.
- Test a model offering financial incentives for behavioral health clinicians to adopt EHRs and facilitate information exchange between providers.
- Expand Medicaid coverage with supplemental payments for providers to treat behavioral health patients.
- Provide financial incentives and require accountability to build integrated care delivery into existing payment models for Medicaid MCOs, Medicare ACOs, and MA plans.
- Update network performance standards across payers and health plans to ensure enough behavioral health providers are available to provide services.
- Set a statewide minimum standard for inpatient psychiatric beds and a staffing minimum for these beds established by best practices in order to create diversion from emergency department Baker Act Admissions.
- Require the entities funded by the accredited Florida network Managing Entities to work directly with local emergency departments and inpatient hospitals for timely placement of patients in need.

Water Quality & Public Health Impacts

- Lee Health has been working with Southwest Florida community leaders to study how algae blooms might impact an individual's health and how to best diagnose and treat patients who may have been exposed. This ongoing effort began in 2018.
- Lee Health supports research initiatives such as those being conducted at the Florida Gulf Coast University Water School and will provide as much assistance as possible in providing data. Federal, state, and local government agencies have been directed to appropriate specific dollars to study and mitigate all impacts of harmful algae blooms.

Hospital Price Transparency

- Lee Health is a model public health system operating in the Florida sunshine with a publicly elected board of directors. We offer pricing information to patients and the public but do not support one size fits all mandates that force health systems to release rates negotiated in contracts with insurance companies.



Training Tomorrow's Doctors & Nurses

- Lee Health supports continued funding for the GME medical residency programs as well as the physician supplemental payment program, and Indirect Medical education program. Training doctors and providing them opportunities to practice locally is a priority for Lee Health. Lee Health's GME program has graduated 32 physicians, 16 of whom took jobs in Lee County, a total of 18 (56%) in Southwest Florida, and a total of 23 (72%) in the State of Florida.
- Lee Health is planning to open a second GME program in internal medicine at Cape Coral Hospital. Like our successful family medicine program, Florida State University's College of Medicine will serve as the institutional sponsor. The program is slated to begin in 2022.
- Lee Health supports our regional partner, Florida Gulf Coast University in their pursuit to significantly expand their nursing program.

HEALTH INSURANCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Access to Local Physicians

- Vivida Health Plan is the only local provider-sponsored community-based health plan administering Florida Medicaid benefits in Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties.
- Lee Health supports equal treatment for Provider Service Networks and Health Management Organizations under Florida Law. The auto-assignment of Medicaid enrollees to certain Medicaid plans and the statutory cap of per region of plans are two issues that must be equitably addressed. Lee Health supports preserving the essential role of Provider Service Networks under Florida law.

Telemedicine/Telehealth

- Lee Health utilizes telemedicine in numerous care delivery scenarios. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for expanded telemedicine services and reimbursement models. We implemented telemedicine consultations in our children's hospital, home health, mental health through Lee Community Healthcare, and in our emergency departments.
- Telehealth can serve as an important tool for answering medical questions before, during, and after natural disasters. Lee Health has at times offered free telehealth services during hurricane season and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Florida Legislature and Congress should act to codify telemedicine advancements made during the COVID-19 pandemic and support future telemedicine legislation that requires certified clinical care being properly reimbursed and further encourages utilization.

2022 STATE & FEDERAL REQUESTS

Support Lee Health Enabling Legislation

- Lee Memorial Health System (DBA Lee Health) is a local government district established by Florida law. The enabling legislation provides for a public health care system that sets forth a number of specific duties and powers under the law.
- Lee Health's first hospital was built in 1916 and the enabling legislation creating our public charge was originally enacted in 1963. The enabling legislation was re-codified in the early 2000's along with all other special districts in Florida. Lee Health provides a number of services such as the Children's Hospital, Provider Service Network, and Trauma Center that serve all of SWFL.
- The proposed changes to the enabling legislation will: (1) strike provisions related to and outdated lien law, (2) revise provisions related to investments, (3) clarify that the health system operates within and beyond the boundaries of Lee County, (4) permit remote access to Board meetings and workshops, (5) provide technical and clarifying changes, and (6) make explicitly clear that Lee Health does not have tax authority.

Support Federal COVID Funding Forgiveness

- One tranche of COVID funding called Medicare Advance Loans were the major mechanism by which most health systems financed operations when elective surgeries were suspended.
- Lee Health supports an elimination of the Medicare Advance loan repayments. These loans were utilized to keep staff employed and extend healthcare services to those in need. Medicare loans should be viewed in the same light as PPP business loans: if used for employing staff and continuing operations, they should be forgiven.

Protect State Medicaid Reimbursement

- Medicaid does not cover the full cost of care provided to Medicaid members. Base and supplemental Medicaid rates directed to healthcare providers must not be cut.

Trauma Regulation

- Lee Health continues to offer exceptional trauma care at our Level II Trauma Center and will pursue any expansions determined necessary by our Board, qualifications in statute, and the Florida Trauma System Advisory Council.

Protect 340B Drug Pricing Program

- Congress created the 340B program to limit the price that drug manufacturers may demand of safety net providers. This was done to give 'covered entities' access to price reductions in order to stretch scarce federal resources. These covered entities, who by statute include only government-owned or not-for-profit safety-net providers, should be protected from drug manufacturers price hikes.
- Support legislation that prohibits health insurers and Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) from discriminating against 340B providers or their contract pharmacies

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