

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 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 at Lee Memorial Hospital and the Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida.

Lee Health is one of the nation's largest public health systems to operate without receiving 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 care during pandemics, hurricanes, and all other challenges that face our community. 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 and community education prevention and outreach. Lee Health provides valuable return on investment for taxpayers.

COVID-19 Response Saved 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!
- As a public health system, we must be good stewards of our resources. Lee Health lost \$20 million in operating revenues as a result of COVID-19. While substantial, this is lower than our original forecasts of a \$50-\$75 million operating loss.
- 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, temporarily freezing hiring, freezing merit increases, reducing pay for senior staff, and permanent reductions in purchased services all play an important part in getting through these very difficult times.
- Additional COVID relief funding, limitations on changes to terms of previously dispersed relief funding, increased funding earmarked for PPE and testing, liability protections, and a government approved crisis standards of care will be critical components of a recovery.

Behavioral Healthcare Access

- Lee Health is committed to improving behavioral health and substance abuse care both in Lee County and across the Southwest Florida region. The need for stabilization, education, cognitive behavioral health treatment from licensed professionals, peer counseling, and medication assisted treatment
- Lee Health supports extending Medicaid to cover mental health and substance abuse services. Offer a pilot stipend program to qualifying Masters students to fill workforce shortage gaps and train psychologist and psychiatrists of the future.

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. 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.

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.

Medicaid for Low-Income Women & Children

- Approximately 600,000 Floridians have joined Medicaid as a result of COVID-19 related job losses. We are seeing increasingly more uninsured patients due to increased numbers of those who choose not to purchase insurance.
- Regardless of what happens with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), health coverage options should be codified for every American in the law and no-one should be denied coverage based on pre-existing conditions.

2021 STATE & FEDERAL REQUESTS

Support Lee Health State Enabling Bill

- 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, and (5) provide technical and clarifying changes.

Support Federal COVID Funding Forgiveness

- Congress appropriated COVID funding to hospitals to save them from layoffs and closures after stay-at-home orders and preparedness needs suspended elective surgeries.
- One tranche of COVID funding was 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.

Oppose Federal ACA Medicaid Cuts

- Congress must act to eliminate an impending \$4 billion cut to Medicaid uncompensated care DSH funding. Lee Health will be cut \$7.6 million if Congress doesn't act.

Protect State Medicaid Reimbursement

- Medicaid does not cover the full cost of care provided to Medicaid members. Florida must resist cutting state Medicaid reimbursement rates to backfill COVID-19 budget losses.

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.

Support Directed Payment Program (DPP)

- Lee Health supports the creation of a Medicaid Directed Payment Program (DPP). This public-private hospital partnership helps hospitals offset some of their uncompensated Medicaid care costs.
- As authorized by federal HHS, hospitals are grouped by Medicaid region or class of hospital to generate the non-federal Medicaid share. The non-federal share is provided through agreements between local governments and hospitals and/or directly by public hospitals. Medicaid payments are then passed through Medicaid MCO's and paid directly to hospitals for qualifying Medicaid visits.

Protect Federal 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 solve a specific problem and 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.