

On The Issues:

- COVID-19 Impact
- Medicaid Funding
- Personal Injury Protection
- Other Important Issues

NCH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

A Community Asset

NCH Healthcare System is a keystone to Collier County & Southwest Florida's individual health and our strong economy. Since our groundbreaking in 1954, NCH has led the way in providing access to cutting-edge medical treatments. NCH is also one of the largest employers in the region with approximately 5,000 employees, of which roughly 3,500 are direct care providers. Our system has offices across Collier County and the Bonita/Estero community. Working in partnership with the Mayo Clinic, NCH Healthcare System continues to seek advancements in providing care and efficiencies in how we operate to improve patient outcomes and decrease costs. Last year, NCH provided:

- Care to over 40,500 inpatient & observation patients and 3,505 births
- 123,100 emergency visits
- The NCH Physicians Group provided approximately 700,000 patient encounters
- NCH provides 97% of the indigent care in Collier County, making our system THE safety net in our community

COVID-19

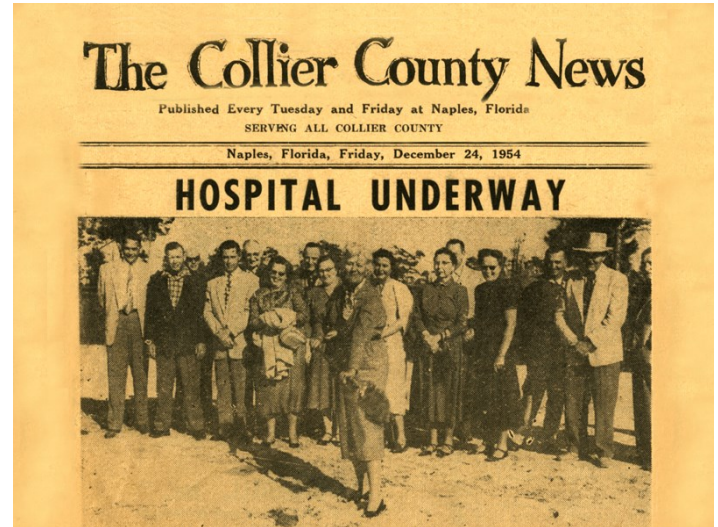
No issue will shape Florida's health care landscape or impact virtually every aspect of life in our great state more than the response to the global coronavirus-19 pandemic. The very bedrock of Florida's economy has been shaken and millions of Floridians have experienced financial, emotional, and the significant health challenge related to efforts aimed at resolving this crisis.

As of 18 November, NCH provided over 40,000 tests and our county had over 16,000 confirmed cases. Sadly, just under 270 deaths have occurred related to this virus in Collier County as of November 18.

NCH supports efforts to encourage social distancing, personal hygiene, and wearing of masks to slow the spread of the virus.

PIP Insurance

Personal Injury Protection insurance (PIP) repeal was proposed in 2020 and is anticipated again in 2021. The hospitals that receive automobile accident victims could face significant challenges seeking compensation, especially from those who are uninsured, without some form of mandatory bodily injury coverage.



Medicaid Funding

Medicaid patients represent approximately 9% of the total treated by NCH during the 2019/20 fiscal year (ending Sept. 31). While a relatively small portion of the patient health coverage for our system, Medicaid presents a much-needed source of health security to thousands of our neighbors in Southwest Florida. Without this program, many would either delay care for a treatable condition or enter our system with no ability to pay, ultimately shifting those costs to other Floridians. Wherever Medicaid patients seek care, this vital safety net program supports the strength of our community through better outcomes, improved health & wellness, and long-term reduced costs on society.

NCH supports

- Enhanced funding for Medicaid programs
- Strengthening of measures to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Improve HIPAA-compliant electronic health record coordination to improve patient care, reduce medical errors, increase patient control of their health care information, and ultimately improve patient outcomes
- Alignment of value-based incentive and pay-for-performance programs to improve patient outcomes

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

Mental and Behavioral Health

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, increased stresses and isolation contributed to an increase in mental and behavioral health reports
- NCH supports initiatives to expand access to services, improve community partnerships, and other efforts to support our communities and our partners in care treating patients

Safety of Hospital Personnel

- NCH supports legislation which would provide enhanced penalties for violent crimes against health care workers. (SB 950 by Rouson; filed in 2020 but did not pass)
- NCH supports legislation providing a public records exemption for emergency room health care practitioners (SB 878 by Harrell/HB 145 by Grieco; filed in 2020 but did not pass)

Telehealth

- Telehealth has proven to be an effective and necessary delivery method for many healthcare needs
- Not only general medical appointments, but serious medical crises have seen an increase in utilization of telehealth to diagnose & provide prompt access to specialists
- NCH supports initiatives to increase access to telehealth and for those services to be reimbursed at an equal rate to face-to-face office visits