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Duval County

Legislative Delegation

June 2, 2015

The Honorable Andy Gardiner, Senate President
409 The Capitol
404 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Steve Crisafulli, Speaker of the House
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear President Gardiner and Speaker Crisafulli,

On behalf of the communities that we represent, we request your support of \$95 million in critical funding for UF Health Jacksonville, the region's safety net hospital for Northeast Florida. UF Health Jacksonville is at risk of closing without a sustainable funding mechanism.

With 650 beds, UF Health Jacksonville represents approximately 24% of all hospital beds in Jacksonville. The loss of these beds would likely result in a shortage of available hospital beds, as the area's other hospitals have average utilization rates of 87 to 90%, and do not have the capacity to serve the UF Health Jacksonville patient population.

As a level one trauma center serving over 1 million Floridians in Northeast Florida, UF Health Jacksonville is the sixth largest employer in the region with over 5,000 employees. It is also the largest employer of minorities in Jacksonville.

UF Health Jacksonville is a major minority access provider and ensures access to health care in some of the most economically disadvantaged parts of Duval County. UF Health Jacksonville also has one of the highest ratios of nonpaying and Medicaid patients in the state.

UF Health Jacksonville is important to all Floridians as it is the third largest medical residency program in Florida. The looming physician shortage crisis facing Florida creates a real need to ensure that the medical residency and teaching hospitals that train the next generation of physicians remain robust. The shortage of physicians will impact every community in Florida and we must ensure that UF Health medical residency programs remain among the best. UF Health Jacksonville currently has over 350 resident physicians in their teaching program.

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The Duval Delegation met on May 27, 2015 and after extensive deliberation has concluded that UF Health Jacksonville needs financial support in the amount of \$95 million from the legislature in the 2015-2016 budget. It is the consensus of members of the Duval Delegation that any reduction in UF Health Jacksonville's current funding will put the hospital at risk of closing.

The Duval Delegation is committed to a continued process of review and improvement of the methodology of reimbursement and access to safety net hospitals for all Floridians. The need for reform is evident and it remains clear that such reforms will take time to accomplish. The access to care that the safety net hospitals provide is a critical link in Florida's health care delivery system and the need to maintain the medical residency program remains critical for all Floridians.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the citizens of Florida continue to benefit from the UF Health Jacksonville Medical Residency program and that the citizens of Northeast Florida continue to have access to this important health care institution.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Janet H. Adkins, Representative
Chair, Duval County Legislative Delegation

The Honorable Mia Jones, Representative
Vice Chair, Duval County Legislative Delegation

The Honorable Aaron Bean, Senator

The Honorable Audrey Gibson, Senator

The Honorable Jay Fant, Representative

The Honorable Reggie Fullwood, Representative

The Honorable Charles McBurney, Representative

The Honorable Lake Ray, Representative

Cc: Governor Rick Scott

Senator Tom Lee; Chair of Senate Appropriations

Representative Richard Corcoran; Chair of House Appropriations