



FMA

FLORIDA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 10269 | Tallahassee, FL | 32302

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County Commission Members of Naples,

I am the President of the Florida Medical Association (FMA), which has over 25,000 physician members, and I am writing to give you the perspective of the FMA regarding NCH Health Care System's new care model that limits hospital admissions to NCH employed hospitalists and prohibits non-employed community physicians from admitting, directing the care of, and discharging their patients.

I am a resident of the City of Naples having lived here since 1996. I was not only on staff at NCH for much of that time but also served as the vice chair and chair of the department of internal medicine for 6 years and also served on the medical executive committee. I am a past president of the Collier County Medical Association and now serve as the president of the FMA. I am very concerned, as a physician, patient and as a leader in organized medicine about NCH's new care model and the possibility of NCH moving to a closed, employee only, staff model.

The Florida Medical Association believes that patients have a right to choose the physician that provides their care and should be able to choose where that care is provided. We support medical staff autonomy, the right to full due process when credentials are challenged and the right of medical staffs to be self-governed and independently advised. Finally, it is the position of the FMA that medical staff privileges not be limited to only those physicians employed by the hospital.

The closing of a medical staff potentially alienates a large number of community physicians, who are providing care to patients, and who work tirelessly to help Collier County have the best healthcare in Florida. We do not believe that a patient's best interests are served by eliminating the possibility of their treating physician participating in their inpatient care. We would ask that the City Council closely examine NCH's new care model and take any steps available and necessary to ensure that the patients best interests are put before hospital system self-interest.

Corey Howard, MD, FACP, FMNM
President, Florida Medical Association
Chair, Board of Governors, Florida Medical Association
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