

Subject Line: Supporting Legislation to Strengthen Healthcare Access in Broward County

I am writing to share my support for **legislation** that would allow Broward County's two public hospital systems, Broward Health and Memorial Healthcare System, to work together more effectively to better serve our community.

Many Broward families already face significant barriers to care. In some neighborhoods, pregnant women must travel 30 to 45 minutes for prenatal services, families leave the county to access pediatric or specialty care, and access to emergency and behavioral health services remains limited. As Broward County's public safety-net providers, Broward Health and Memorial cannot turn away patients or walk away from these essential services. Collaboration is one of the most practical ways to protect and expand access to care for Broward families.

Independently, these two public hospital systems have invested more than \$1.5 billion in new facilities, emergency departments, maternity services, and mobile clinics, particularly in underserved areas. However, outdated statutory and regulatory frameworks currently limit their ability to collaborate, share resources, and coordinate services, even when doing so would directly benefit patients.

Thoughtful legislation would help modernize these policies by clearly allowing collaboration between public hospital systems while preserving separate governance, independent operations, transparency, and accountability under Florida's Sunshine Laws.

The legislation is needed to provide clear state authorization for this collaboration, reducing the risk of unnecessary litigation that can delay or deter patient-centered care. This collaboration is not a merger, does not create a monopoly, and does not reduce competition. It would simply allow Broward Health and Memorial Healthcare System to coordinate care, align services, and work together more effectively for patients. Similar collaborative frameworks are already working successfully in many other states.

Legislation that enables collaboration would help Broward County:

- Expand access to maternity, pediatric, and behavioral health services
- Improve physician recruitment, retention, and specialty coverage
- Deploy mobile health units and community-based clinics in high-need neighborhoods
- Address persistent health disparities, including infant mortality
- Keep healthcare dollars invested locally for the benefit of Broward residents

As discussions continue ahead of the 2027 legislative session, I encourage you to support efforts that remove barriers to collaboration between Broward's public hospitals, always with patients and community access as the guiding priority.

Thank you for your continued service to Broward County and for considering policies that strengthen our local healthcare system and protect access to care for the families who depend on it.