

## LEGISLATION APPROVED TO HELP FUND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

The holidays came early in Washington D.C. as legislators in the House voted 361 to 61 to approve \$1.63 billion in funding for community health centers for 2019. The Senate previously passed the bill 93 to 7.

The bipartisan support will be combined with \$4 billion authorized earlier in the year bringing the total support to \$5.6 billion.

"This is tremendous news for Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) and Health Centers throughout this country," said Brodes H. Hartley Jr., CHI President and CEO. "Community Health Centers care for some of this nation's most under-served communities including 13 million people living in poverty. Everyone deserves access to high quality healthcare."

The majority of community health center patients are uninsured or publicly insured. Health Centers like CHI are open to everyone, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. It offers a sliding fee scale option based on a patient's income to make healthcare affordable and obtainable. In addition, federally qualified health centers like CHI offer a comprehensive set of services such as primary care, pediatrics, OB/GYN, dental, behavioral health, urgent care, vision, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and more.

Marina Vacas is one of CHI's 83,000



*(Left to right) Manuel Garcia, MD., Molrine Tracey, MD., Elizabeth Philippe, MD., Saint Anthony Amofah, MD., Tamara Wright, MD., Abiona Redwood, MD., Edgard Nunez, MD.*

patients and among the country's 28 million community health center patients. She became a CHI patient about 20 years ago. At the time she was unemployed and uninsured and had issues with her cholesterol and calcifications in her breasts.

"It was a relief, recalled Vacas. "I came here, and it was very affordable to have my mammograms or my check-ups, my blood tests and all that."

She said if she didn't have CHI she likely wouldn't seek care and her health would suffer. Such is the case for so many patients who now benefit from the newly released federal funding.

"In this country, especially here in Miami Dade, it is very difficult," said Vacas. "We

need these centers."

The money will help fund quality improvements, expansions and support for behavioral health and substance abuse disorders.

"We are so very grateful to all lawmakers in both the House and Senate for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the Health Centers Program, and look forward to working with all Members in the coming year to secure long-term, stable funding that ensures the sustainability and success of health centers long into the future," said Tom Van Coverden, President of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC).

# A Message from the President



Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all of you. It's been a tremendous year for Community Health of South Florida, Inc (CHI) and I want to thank you for your support. Our Teaching Health Center graduated its second class of residents in 2018 and became an ACGME accredited program. CHI made national headlines when we hosted Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi for a roundtable discussion with our leadership and patients about access to care. We also started a new forensic program to bridge court services with mental health care. Plus, in 2018, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recognized CHI as a Health Center Quality Leader, placing us among the top 30 percent of Federally Qualified Health Centers nationwide in clinical quality measures. Those are just a few of the outstanding achievements of this organization and I could not be prouder of the accomplishments of this team.

None of this would be possible if legislators in Washington didn't lend their support. I want to thank our Senate and Congressional leaders for ensuring that Community Health Centers like CHI have the funding we need to carry out our mission.

We have come so far, yet we have so much further to go. CHI is committed to making the Children's Crisis Center a reality. We hope to break ground next year so that families have the intensive treatment that is needed for children with severe mental health issues. Beyond this, we will be starting our Coconut Grove expansion project to better meet the needs of our community in the Grove. Our health center at 3831 Grand Avenue, Miami FL 33133 will nearly double in size after the completion of this project. This will allow us to offer more services at that site.

Parking is almost always an issue in South Florida and CHI promised our patients easier access to our health centers. This year we completed the expansion of the parking lot at our Doris Ison Health Center and we recently added lifts to our West Kendall Health Center to increase parking availability. The same was added previously to the South Miami Health Center. West Kendall, South Miami and Coconut Grove Health Centers also offer free valet parking.

This organization was founded in 1971 to ensure that everyone has access to care and we remain committed to that objective. May the New Year bring even more possibilities for CHI and those that we serve.

Warm Greetings,

Brodes H. Hartley Jr.  
President and CEO



## NEW EASIER TO USE ONLINE CHI PATIENT PORTAL IS NOW AVAILABLE TO YOU

### On the portal you can....

- Request an appointment
- Request a refill on medications
- Download a list of your medications
- Download copies of your records
- Review lab results
- Review immunizations
- Review vital signs

**How Do I Sign Up? Get your login information from the front desk staff at any CHI Health Center.**

# FASTING AWAY THE EXTRA WEIGHT

It is that time of the year when everyone wants an easy, fast way to get rid of all the extra pounds gained during the holidays. Some turn to fasting as a way to lose the weight. Those who do it drink only water or juice and avoid food for 24-48 hours.

Many religions promote the practice but medical experts caution people from doing it.

“A lot of churches will do this without checking on these things and that’s not good,” said Gloria Fuller, Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) Registered Dietitian. “If someone is diabetic, if they’re hypertensive or if they’re on medications that’s problematic. Many medications require food.”

For most healthy adults fasting for a couple days won’t be dangerous.



*Registered Dietitian Gloria Fuller said fasting can be dangerous.*

But it can be for those with chronic diseases, the elderly, pregnant women or children. Plus Fuller says you are not losing weight during that period.

“The first 24 hours is really water loss more than anything,” she said.

“But the next day you’re going to eat twice as much and be right back where you were. That’s the problem.”

Fasting for extended periods of time can have serious effects on your health. You will lose muscle because you don’t

have the energy to exercise, you can experience dizziness, headaches, low blood sugar, dehydration and more. Plus, your body learns to burn calories at a slower rate to conserve. That means when you go back to eating, you gain weight more easily.

The bottom line is there is no easy way to drop the weight.

“Weight loss is exercise plus portion control,” said Fuller. “So, you need to expend more energy than you put in. You need to exercise no less than an hour every day. So, its calories in, energy expended.”

CHI has two nutritionists that can help you plan your diet. Just ask your doctor for a referral and start losing weight the healthy way.

# DENTAL SEALANTS PROTECT TEETH AS YOUR CHILD GROWS

Eight-year-old Genesis Guevara loves to smile and wants to keep her pearly whites healthy. Unlike her 4 siblings, she has never had a cavity.

On her regularly scheduled dental cleaning at Community Health of South Florida’s Doris Ison Dental Department, the hygienist suggests that she gets sealants on her back teeth.

“Sealants are very important,” said Dr. Sheri Watson-Hamilton, Director of CHI Dental. “Sealants help prevent cavities on children when they get their first molars and premolars, the larger teeth in the back of the mouth.”

These back teeth have grooves that you can feel if you run your tongue along the back of your mouth. Those grooves can collect bacteria and dirt, despite brushing.

“The sealant actually creates a barrier,” said Dr. Watson-Hamilton. “This helps save you money in the long run by preventing cavities.”

For Genesis’ mom, Patricia Galindo, this is an easy decision. “I get worried about cavities. So, this is a good option.”

The sealant is like a varnish that is painted on the back teeth. It hardens immediately and serves as a barrier, preventing food and acid from going into the teeth’s grooves. It’s recommended that children receive the sealant sometime between the age of 5 and 6 and then again around age 12. The sealant contains small amounts of Bisphenol A, otherwise known as BPA. That’s the chemical found in water bottles and plastic food containers. BPA has been linked to negative health effects on the body. But according to the American Dental Association, there are only trace amounts and sealants are not a threat to a child’s health.

“The Pediatric Dental Association recognizes sealants as part of the quality of care,” said Dr. Watson-Hamilton. Now



*(left to right) Maria Pierro, CHI Registered Dental Hygienist, explains the need for sealants to 8-year-old Genesis Guevara and her mom, Patricia Galindo.*

there are more oral health initiatives that are increasing the uses of dental sealants and fluoride varnishes. So, the combination of those two are helping reduce cavities.”

Sealants are covered by most dental insurance plans for kids up to the age of 12.



# NEW LEADERS AT CHI



**Sandra Reyes** is the new Director of Patient Services. Reyes comes with more than 20 years of experience in the Healthcare industry which includes software and administration knowledge.

She received her undergraduate degree from Rutgers University, in New Jersey and a master's degree from Florida International University. Reyes later worked as an adjunct faculty member at Nova Southeastern University where she combined her experience and education by teaching health care professionals. She has experience in analysis of workflows and success in finding strategies to improve them.

These opportunities cemented the success of Community Health Centers to consistently meet organizational goals and increase efficiencies. She also has strong collaborative skills and has been credited with the development and implementation of new health care technology. Reyes said she hopes her leadership of the department will help improve the overall patient experience at Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

**Yvette Casas** is the new Director of Managed Care at CHI. The department oversees referrals, HEDIS, (Health Effectiveness Data and Information Set) a set of managed care performance measures, Care Coordination, and Comprehensive AIDS Resources and Education Services (CARES). Yvette began the first stage of her career working for Ocean Bank as a lending officer after she received her Bachelor of Science degree in finance from Florida International University. She later returned to school to get her BSN nursing degree from Barry University.

Although initially focused on clinical work at Jackson Memorial Hospital and later Baptist Health, she took an administrative position at a Federally Qualified Health Center as a program manager and nursing administrator. Most recently she was the Health Services manager at Leon Medical Center Health plans where she led Care Coordination, Disease Management, and Case Management for the Managed Care Organization. She believes her primary goal is to assist not only the patients, but the providers at CHI to continue the mission of the organization.



Connect with us online:



[www.chisouthfl.org](http://www.chisouthfl.org)



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/CommunityHealthOfSouthFlorida](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityHealthOfSouthFlorida)



Follow us on  
**Twitter**

@CHISouthFlorida



Find us on  
**YouTube**