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Board Report
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March 12, 2025

Brevard County Commissioners
Brevard County Commission
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, FL 32940

Dear Brevard County Commissioners,

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to ensuring Brevard residents have access to the healthcare they need. Like you, we are closely monitoring the impact of Orlando Health's decision to close Rockledge Hospital. We recognize the gap in services this creates for the Rockledge community and uncertainty it brings for many patients, families, and healthcare professionals. To understand the impact, consider that Orlando Health Rockledge Hospital has historically handled:

- Approximately 25,000 Emergency Department visits annually
- Nearly 500 labor and delivery cases per year
- Over 6,800 inpatient discharges each year

As Brevard's local, not-for-profit healthcare system, Health First has spent the past 30 years committed to the health and wellness of our community. In times of change, that commitment only strengthens and while Orlando Health is divesting access points in Brevard, we are focused on investments and expansion including:

- Expanding capacity at our hospitals—Holmes Regional Medical Center, Viera Hospital, and Palm Bay Hospital—to accommodate increased patient needs.
- Accelerating our construction of the new Cape Canaveral Hospital and Medical Office Building on Merritt Island, with a targeted opening in early 2027. Importantly, Cape Canaveral Hospital will remain fully operational until the new hospital is completed and open for business.


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- Enhancing emergency response capabilities with the addition of a second air ambulance, First Flight, strategically positioned in the north part of the county to ensure faster transport for critical patients needing advanced care.
- Partnering with Parrish Healthcare to strengthen care options in North Brevard through expanded collaboration within our Health Plan network. We are encouraged by the early signs of growth and continue to explore additional ways to work together.
- Finalizing details to construct and open two new free-standing emergency departments in Brevard County – including one targeted for Central Brevard. As our community continues to grow, the need for accessible, high-quality emergency care has never been greater. These new facilities will help ensure that residents have convenient access to emergency care, close to home.
- Welcoming healthcare professionals from Orlando Health Rockledge who wish to continue serving Brevard residents, ensuring we retain critical talent within our community. Of course, the challenges posed by a hospital closure of this scale cannot be met by any one organization alone. That's why we are working closely with local leaders, EMS, and other healthcare providers to minimize disruptions and strengthen access to care for our community.

We are not just responding to this moment; we are building solutions for a stronger, healthier future. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss any specific concerns you may have and explore how we can work together to ensure residents in your Districts continue receiving the care they need.

Thank you again for your leadership and advocacy. I look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,



Terry Forde
President and CEO
Health First