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Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida and University of Florida College of Dentistry Announce Change in Administration at NCEF Pediatric Dental Center

(Naples, Florida) Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida and the University of Florida College of Dentistry announced a change in their administrative management at the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center. Since opening in December 2008, the center's operations have been coordinated through a collaboration between Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida and the University of Florida College of Dentistry (UFCD). Healthcare Network handled operational and clinical administration of the dental center, and UFCD faculty directed the educational and clinical program that provides comprehensive care for children in Collier County. The dental center will remain on the Collier Campus of Florida SouthWestern State College where it has been since its inception.

Beginning January 1, 2019, Healthcare Network will transition the administration of the dental center over to UFCD, as Healthcare Network focuses on the Nichols Community Health Center, a new project that will enhance medical and dental health services offered to the community. UFCD will continue to provide the same comprehensive oral health care services and educational programs, and will take over the operational aspects of the center as well.

“Since 2008, working together with UF, the pediatric dental center has completed over 135,000 patient visits for children from Collier County and surrounding areas, most of whom may not otherwise have access to oral health care,” said Mike Ellis, president and chief executive officer of Healthcare Network. “This has been a very successful relationship initiated and supported by the Naples Children & Education Foundation, founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival, after identifying a need for dental care for children in Collier County. We are proud to have played a role in the first decade of service from the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center and are committed to continuing to work with UFCD and community partners to improve access to care in this community.”

Dr. A. Isabel Garcia, dean of the UF College of Dentistry, said that the excellence and continuity of patient care will not be affected by the administrative change, “UFCD provides dental care to patients from every county in Florida, generally handling all educational and administrative operations. This change brings the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center in alignment with our standard practice. We plan to work closely with the Healthcare Network to ensure a seamless transition, uninterrupted care to patients, and offer jobs to Healthcare Network staff who now work in the center. We remain fully invested in continuing top-rate care for which the center is known and to working with the community, which has so greatly benefitted from our collaboration with the Healthcare Network and the generosity of the Naples Children & Education Foundation.”

Garcia says she is also grateful for the relationship the dental center enjoys with Florida SouthWestern State College, which has been continuously supportive of UFCD's educational and clinical care programs.

Patients' families will receive official notification with information for making appointments with the NCEF Pediatric Dental Center and transferring their dental records. The center is also home to an accredited UF pediatric dental residency program, and operates community oral health outreach services including Women, Infants and Children Oral Health, oral health surveillance and screening programs in 32 Collier County schools, a school-based dental sealant program, and a promotora de salud/community health worker. All these oral health services and educational programs at the center will continue.

For more information about the transition, please call 239-658-3000.

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[Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida](#)

Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida is a not-for-profit organization providing primary medical and dental care to the Collier County community since 1977. Founded by community leaders in Immokalee, Healthcare Network has 22 locations, including the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® and the Health and Smiles Mobile. Healthcare Network's service areas include: children's care, family care, women's care, dental care, senior care and integrated behavioral healthcare. For more information, visit www.HealthcareNetworkSWFL.org, or to schedule an appointment, please call 239-658-3000.

[University of Florida College of Dentistry](#)

The UF College of Dentistry's mission is to provide innovative dental education and deliver the highest degree of patient-centered care and service, while promoting discovery and the generation of knowledge through research, with strong commitments to community engagement, diversity and inclusion. Our dental centers in Gainesville, Hialeah, Naples and St. Petersburg complete over 140,000 patient visits annually. For more information, visit the [UF College of Dentistry](#) or the [NCEF Pediatric Dental Center](#) online, or call 352-273-5953 to schedule an appointment.