



## Family Doctors of Belleview joins forces with Villages Health

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### STAFF REPORT

THE VILLAGES – The Villages Health’s plan to establish “Marcus Welby-style” physicians throughout the community took a step forward Saturday with the announcement that The Family Doctors of Belleview – the only practice in Florida to be accredited as a “Medical Home of Excellence” – will be serving in the first Villages Health Care Center.

That center is scheduled to open this fall in Colony Plaza. It will be the first of a series of Villages Health Care Centers to be located conveniently throughout the community.

The Family Doctors of Belleview team, led by Dr. Joseph Hildner, was also recently congratulated by Gov. Rick Scott for being designated as a “Level II patient-centered medical home.” More than 3,000 Villagers already turn to Hildner and his team of “family doctors” as their primary care physicians.

According to The Villages developer, Gary Morse, bringing the award-winning Hildner team into The Villages Health is the first step in transforming the care received by Villagers.

“Going forward, The Villages Health will be recruiting other such physicians of excellence, both locally and nationally,” Morse said. “There are some excellent, highly qualified physicians out there who are eager for the opportunity to practice more personalized, ‘Marcus Welby-style’ medicine here.”

Morse said the vision is to establish care centers throughout The Villages so that all residents are only a short golf car drive away from their own “Marcus Welby.”

“The kind of care they receive will be much different from what many have experienced in the recent past,” Morse said.

Morse also pointed out that the current Medicare system has pushed many doctors into a quantity-over-quality business model, where their income is often based on how many patients they can see in a day, as well as how many tests and referrals they order.

“Our Villages Health Care Centers will be very different. In fact, they will be more like the family doctor’s offices many of us remember from our youth, where you were known and treated as neighbors and friends,” Morse said. “It also means no more getting sick and then being told that the doctor can see you two weeks from Thursday. Our Villages Health doctors will be on a generous salary that is not tied to the

volume of patients or number of tests ordered. That way, they are free to practice medicine in the old-fashioned, personal way many of us seniors remember. And yet, they'll have all the modern expertise and technology to benefit their patients."

These modern "Marcus Welbys" will also have the advantage of a close working relationship with the University of South Florida Health, which will be acting as a partner and resource to The Villages Health.

Ultimately, Morse added, primary care doctors like Hildner and his team will be connected with specialty doctors in a Mayo Clinic-style system.

"That's the goal – that Villagers enjoy health care similar to what patients enjoy at a Mayo Clinic, where all your doctors work together with most services under one roof, utilizing one electronic medical records system," he said.

According to Dr. Kira Zwygart, chair of USF Health's Department of Family Medicine, "The opportunity for USF Health to help recruit and support primary care doctors in The Villages Health is very exciting. We believe that our research and training can be a tremendous benefit that helps insure that patients in The Villages receive the very best in modern care without all the impersonal, bureaucracy often associated with health care these days."

Dr. Darrell G. Kirch, president and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges, agreed that the close connection and working relationship with a major medical university like USF will greatly enhance the level of care enjoyed by Villagers.

"You're looking at the best in modern training and technology, and yet, it will be delivered to the patient in a personal, quality-driven manner rather than the volume-driven model many doctors currently have to work in," Kirch said. "It really is a tremendous initiative and the whole medical world will be watching as this Villages Health model develops."

