



Florida Health Care Coalition

*“Quality First, Always!”
Celebrating 27 Years of Quality 1984 - 2011*

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CONTACT:

Lori C. Booker, APR
lcbooker@cbrpr.com
407-834-7777 (24-hours)

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Becky Cherney Steps Down From Pioneering Health-Care Alliance

Florida Health Care Coalition CEO resigns citing health issues

ORLANDO, Fla. (June 27, 2011) – Becky J. Cherney, heralded by the New York Times as running what “may be the best health-care alliance in the country,” announced today that she is stepping down as president and CEO of the Florida Health Care Coalition (FHCC), effective immediately. Cherney is leaving the organization she founded 27 years ago because of health-care issues that have plagued her since a serious accident five years ago.



The FHCC board has launched a nationwide search for a successor. Coalition Vice President Scott Langdon is assuming day-to-day administrative responsibilities in the interim.

Board members expressed sadness at Cherney’s announcement, but also admiration for her innovative contributions toward transforming health-care delivery systems not just in Florida but worldwide.

“I don’t think it ever occurred to us that Becky would not prevail over this very personal challenge. She approaches life like she approached her work here, with dauntless courage and enthusiasm,” said Carolyn Aldorfer, FHCC chairman. “Those in the health-care community hold Becky in the highest esteem. We jokingly compare her to that old E.F. Hutton commercial: When Becky talks about health care, even the president listens. I wonder if Floridians appreciate the legacy she is leaving not only to us at the coalition, but in the effort to improve the quality of health-care delivery to all Americans.”

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4401 Vineland Road Suite A-10 • Orlando, Florida 32811 • 407-425-9500 • Fax 407-425-9559
9250 W Flagler St HR-GO • Miami, Florida 33174 • 305-559-2070 • 305-552-4607
www.flhcc.com



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Under Cherney’s leadership, the FHCC has grown to represent and advocate for more than 2 million employees and their dependents at 128 public and private employers in Florida. The coalition was founded in 1984 with 10 charter members representing Central Florida’s largest employers. It expanded beyond Central Florida in 2005.

“Becky Cherney is a health-care visionary and astute predictor of consumer and hospital management behavior. She was instrumental in helping our company explore proven cost-effective health-care options for our cast members with positive results,” said Tracy Swanson, FHCC vice chairman and Walt Disney World Resort’s representative to the coalition. “The strength of this coalition is a reflection of Becky Cherney’s leadership and tireless commitment.”

Cherney, 66, is a familiar face and voice for cost-effective health care. She appeared regularly on national news programs, such as ABC World News, 20/20, and even debated health-care issues with commentator Bill O’Reilly. Notable publications such as the Wall Street Journal looked to her for her unique insights. She is often disarming with her candor, but can quote studies verbatim that support her conclusions and predictions, such as this prescient quote from March 29, 1999: “We can’t afford this [rising health-care costs] anymore. Soon, there won’t be anyone left to provide health insurance except the federal government, and I don’t think you want the federal government to take over.”

“I am most proud of three distinct accomplishments” Cherney said. “First and foremost, I’m proud of the lives we have saved. I think back on people who credit our educational programs for providing them with life-saving information. Secondly, it’s the unique and pioneering success of our Central Florida RHIO [Regional Health Information Organization]. Nowhere else in the country is there an organization that can boast the community collaboration of two competing health-care systems showcased in our CHARTS program [Community Health and Records Technology Systems]. Our prototype has captured the imagination of communities around the country.

“Yet another milestone was the release of a comprehensive study we commissioned on diabetes treatment. It showed how lower co-pays on prescription drugs can save companies money and improve patient care,” Cherney said. The study was published in the respected medical journal Health Affairs and covered by the international press. “No other coalition has ever done anything like that,” Cherney said.

“But what’s most important now is to identify the right person to move the coalition’s initiatives

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forward,” she said. “Continuity is vital to FHCC. I’m confident that my legacy will be protected and new initiatives advanced. The board shares my commitment to this, and I have complete faith in them. FHCC will move forward, and the community will continue to benefit.”

Cherney, former chairman of the National Business Coalitions for Health, received countless recognitions and awards during her career, including the “Health Care Hero Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Orlando Business Journal in 2009. She served on the Florida Board of Medicine for seven years. Florida Trend magazine once recognized her as one of the 60 Most Influential Business Executives in Florida and FHCC earned “Coalition of the Year in 2008” from the National Business Coalitions for Health. A Paul Harris Fellow, she is a charter member of eValue8, a group of coalitions that standardized critical systems. She also is immediate past chairman of the Central Florida RHIO.

Other distinguished but lesser known achievements include Cherney’s establishment of a health-care coalition in South Africa and as founder of the local Women’s Resource Center and its coveted Summit Award program.

Prior to founding the Florida Health Care Coalition she served 20-plus years in the private sector with three Fortune 500 companies.

Cherney cited her physician’s mandate as her reason for resigning. “I can’t lead an organization that promotes following physicians’ orders and then ignore mine,” she said.

About the Florida Health Care Coalition

The Florida Health Care Coalition (FHCC), based in Orlando, Fla., is a 27-year-old organization that represents nearly 2 million members of public- and private-sector employers. Its goal is to improve the quality of health care while reducing the cost. FHCC staff, board members, partners, affiliates and sponsors each year organize events and seminars aimed at continuous improvements in health care not only in Florida but nationwide. For more information, visit www.flhcc.com.