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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Premier Community HealthCare Awarded \$1.2 Million to Create and Expand Federally Qualified Health Centers

DADE CITY, Fla. – (April 4, 2017) – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services last week announced Premier Community HealthCare Group Inc. will receive \$1.2 million to expand services into Hernando County. The sites will be in Brooksville and Spring Hill at medical space previously operated by the Department of Health and will serve an estimated 8,400 patients annually. The funding in the form of a Service Area Competition (SAC) grant, will allow Premier to seamlessly transition services from the Florida Department of Health in Hernando County.

“We are pleased to work closely with Premier Community HealthCare as they expand into Hernando County and continue what we started twelve years ago, as the initial funding recipient of health center funding,” said Robin Napier, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Hernando County. Napier further explained that during the past few years, the Florida Department of Health had reassessed its functions and role in the provision of primary care services. As a result, the department made the decision to divest itself of the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and the provision of primary care, dental care, behavioral health and OB/GYN services so they can focus on the delivery of core public health services.

A FQHC is a federally-designated facility that receives grant money to provide primary care services such as comprehensive medical for children and adults, dental services, laboratory services, health education and promotion, as well as individual case management to patients regardless of their ability to pay. The health center provides services on a sliding fee scale, which is based on the income and household size for the patient.

“When we applied for the SAC grant, we knew there was a great need for increased access to health care services in Hernando County,” said Premier’s CEO, Joey Resnick. “This funding gives us the opportunity to extend our 38-year history of Premier delivering compassionate and quality healthcare services to Hernando County residents while helping reduce barriers to care that many in the area face every day.”

In addition to direct federal funding, which only covers 51 percent of the total operational budget for the two new sites Premier will operate, the FQHC designation allows Premier to offer valuable medication discounts to patients through a 340B Drug Pricing Program. Community health centers, like Premier, have been recognized for improving patient outcomes while reducing health disparities, despite serving a population that is often sicker and more at risk than the general population. The health center model of care is proven to reduce the use of costlier providers of care, such as emergency departments and hospitals.

Based at Spring Hill and Brooksville facilities owned and managed by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), Premier is launching services at the sites co-located with the Florida Department of Health in Hernando County in May. The funding supports hiring health center staff members to provide health services that will expand access to primary care. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “improving health outcomes in the long-term will take more than expanding coverage. It will be important to ensure that insured individuals as well as local residents who remain uninsured are connected to care.”

Coupled with developing community partnerships and broad community outreach throughout Hernando County, the health center will make it a top priority to engage the medically underserved and/or uninsured consumers, educating them about the vital health care coverage they have access to. “With the funding to hire a medical team to operate



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two health centers in Hernando County, Premier will continue its focus on improving access to care for the people who need health care the most," said Resnick.

Limited hours of operation will begin in May. Both sites will be fully operational on or before July 24 at the following locations:

- **Spring Hill Family Health Center, 7551 Forest Oaks Boulevard, Spring Hill, FL 34606**
- **Brooksville Family Health Center, 300 S. Main Street, Brooksville, FL 34601**

The first order of business will be to hire the health center medical and support staff. For job openings, please visit Premier's website. Premier will also provide updated hours of operation and other details on its website:
www.premierhc.org

"Department of Health in Hernando County will work collaboratively with Premier to improve health and health outcomes in Hernando County," said Robin Napier, County Health Officer. "Access to care combined with a strong message regarding healthy behaviors such as reducing rates of obesity and tobacco use will move Hernando County toward better health outcomes and improve our quality of life."

To learn more about Premier Community HealthCare, visit www.premierhc.org

To learn more about HRSA's Health Center Program, visit <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/index.html>

To find a health center in your area, visit <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

About Premier Community HealthCare Group

Officially known as Premier Community HealthCare Group, Inc. (Premier), the organization is a non-profit community health center dedicated to providing high quality, affordable, accessible medical care to Medicaid/Medicare recipients, uninsured and underserved communities of Pasco County. With 7 conveniently located offices throughout Pasco County and 2 new locations to open in Hernando County to serve patients, Premier provides a full range of comprehensive primary care medical services that include Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Dental, Behavioral Health, Obstetrics and Gynecology. Premier has been committed to serving the medically underserved areas with its long-standing presence in Pasco County since 1979. Premier is one of nearly 1,400 community health centers nationwide created by federal legislation that provides some funding for the facilities. The centers are required by law to cater to medically underserved populations.

About Florida Department of Health Hernando County

The Florida Department of Health Hernando County, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Hernando County, through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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