



April 1, 2013

Hon. Will Weatherford
Florida House, District 38
28963 SR 54
Suite A
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

RE: A Florida Solution to Expanding Health Care Coverage

Dear Representative Weatherford:

As you know, the Tampa Bay area is a model for high-quality health care delivery in Florida. From our hospital systems, BayCare and Florida Hospital, to Kindred and Memorial Hospitals to Tampa General's level one trauma distinction to Moffitt's National Cancer Institute designation to USF Health, we have a thriving industry – and world renowned care – in our community. Over 180,000 local jobs are provided by the hospital industry, and hundreds of thousands of people receive care at these institutions each year, some of whom are uninsured and unable to pay. The cost of caring for the approximately 646,000 uninsured in Tampa Bay falls on our hospitals, our businesses, and on the taxpayer.

While there is room for debate about whether the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the best method for providing health care to the uninsured, the ACA has been enacted into law and our state leaders must respond to it in a manner that best serves the interests of Floridians. With this in mind, it is *vital* that the House of Representatives provide a Florida-specific solution to health care expansion under the ACA. Our state has unique challenges to health care delivery, and it deserves a tailored solution for the sake of both health care providers and the uninsured Floridians who rely on them.

This is an opportunity to return some of Floridians' tax dollars back to our state while also ensuring a healthier, more productive workforce. While we applaud the diligent and thoughtful approach the House has taken to this point, this issue is impacted by the schedule prescribed in the ACA. As you know, the federal government is obligated to cover 100% of the cost for health care expansion in years 2014 through 2016. The timeframe is not modified if we delay an additional year. If the legislature chooses to wait until the 2014 legislative session to act, Floridians will lose access to over a billion dollars in taxes that could otherwise be returned to the state.

As an organization representing the business community in Tampa Bay, we know the impact of rising health care costs on our economy. We sincerely appreciate your meticulous approach thus far and implore you to take advantage of this opportunity to act on behalf of Tampa Bay businesses and residents to provide a Florida-specific solution to health care expansion during the 2013 Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Rohrlack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Rohrlack, CEcD
President and CEO

www.tampachamber.com