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*** News Release ***

JAX Business Community Urges Legislators to Fund UF Health Jacksonville

*Northeast Florida leaders rally to support region's only academic health center, Level 1
trauma center*

JACKSONVILLE, FL (March 20, 2015) – A unified Jacksonville business community on Friday urged state legislators to support funding for UF Health Jacksonville – a vital asset and economic engine in Northeast Florida.

UF Health Jacksonville is facing a potential \$95 million shortage this year if the Florida Legislature does not act to ensure critical funding sources remain in tact. Together, two preeminent business organizations in Northeast Florida – the JAX Chamber and the Jacksonville Civic Council – ask the Duval Delegation to work in the Legislature to ensure the current Medicaid funding level for UF Health Jacksonville is not reduced in the 2015 Legislative Session. This can be done by:

- Preserving the \$31 million in special Low Income Pool funding secured in by the late Sen. Jim King and the Duval Delegation
- Keeping Low Income Pool funding at current levels

“This is not just a UF Health issue. This is an economic issue that affects our entire community,” said Ed Burr, chair of the Jacksonville Civic Council and former Chamber chair who now serves as chair of Government Affairs for the Chamber. “The other hospitals in Northeast Florida simply do not have the capacity to absorb the patients currently being cared for by UF Health Jacksonville and a loss of funding at the state level will be felt through our entire region.”

UF Health Jacksonville has more than 90,000 patient visits to its emergency department each year, including 4,000 trauma patients.

With an annual budget of \$550 million and more than 5,000 employees, UF Health Jacksonville is the sixth-largest employer in the region and the largest minority employer in Jacksonville. UF

Health Jacksonville is the only major academic health center and the only Level I trauma center in all of Northeast Florida. With more than 350 University of Florida faculty physicians and over 350 resident physicians, it trains the doctors of tomorrow for the entire region.

“UF Health is one of the hidden gems in our community, and it really ought not to be that way,” said former Jacksonville mayor John Delaney, JAX Chamber chair who also serves on the Civic Council. “The business community can help bring attention to the fact that not only does UF Health provide an essential service with its trauma center and by treating our citizens who are uninsured and underinsured, it is a significant employer with hundreds of millions of economic impact every year.”

The Jacksonville Civic Council partnered with Dixon Hughes Goodman, a national accounting firm, to conduct an independent business review of UF Health Jacksonville’s operations and financial conditions. The study confirmed what national reports have said in the past, that UF Health Jacksonville is one of the most cost-efficient academic medical centers in the country.

UF Health Jacksonville has one of the highest ratios of non-paying and Medicaid patients in the state and is dependent on a recurring, dedicated funding source in order to provide essential, high-quality medical care.

“This is a funding problem – this is not an expense or efficiency problem,” said Kevin Hyde, managing partner of Foley and Lardner and the chair of a Jacksonville Civic Council task force on UF Health. “UF Health has done an outstanding job working with the resources they have, but continues to provide tens of millions of dollars of care every year that is not paid for. Without keeping the state funding at current levels, the numbers simply don’t work.”

About JAX Chamber: The [JAX Chamber](#) is the business membership organization dedicated to driving quality economic growth in Northeast Florida to make this region the best place to live, work and play. Membership provides the opportunity to connect with and buy from other Chamber members. The connections result in business growth and a more prosperous economy.

About Jacksonville Civic Council: The Jacksonville Civic Council is a CEO-led business membership organization founded in 2010. The Civic Council’s vision for Jacksonville is simple and straight forward: We want our city to be a safe, personally satisfying, economically rewarding place to live and raise a family. Our mission is to promote a fiscally responsible, economically vibrant, thriving community, which offers opportunity for all its residents.