

## House Bill No. 1615

An act relating to Lee County; codifying chapters 63-1552 and 78-552, Laws of Florida, as amended; revising said acts, as amended; repealing prior acts and reenacting portions thereof; providing for a public health care system in Lee County to be named Lee Memorial Health System; providing for an elected health care system board, and setting forth its duties and powers; providing compensation of board members; providing for the operation and maintenance of said public health care system; providing for deposit and investment of certain funds; authorizing the issuance of bonds; providing for execution and enforcement of liens; providing for the effect of conflicting provisions; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Chapter 63-1552, Laws of Florida, and amendments thereto made by chapters 69-1235, 72-600, 81-420, 83-452, 83-454, 84-465, 87-438, 91-410, 92-269, and 98-528, Laws of Florida; and chapter 78-552, Laws of Florida, are hereby repealed. Said prior acts are replaced in their entirety by this act. This act shall constitute a codification as required by section 189.429, Florida Statutes. It is declared to be the legislative intent that if any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this act is found to be invalid, the remainder of the act shall not be affected; and further, in order to assure the uninterrupted maintenance and operation of the public health care system provided for herein, that any of the prior acts set forth herein, or any portion thereof, shall survive and be deemed reenacted to the extent necessary to replace any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or provision of this act found to be invalid.

Section 2. The name of the public health care system provided for by this act shall be Lee Memorial Health System, which is a public body, and the governing body thereof shall be the Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors.

Section 3. The operation and maintenance of the public health system, and the construction of health system facilities provided for in this act are declared to be a public purpose.

Section 4. The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors, hereinafter called the system board, is hereby authorized to establish and to provide for the operation and maintenance of a public health care system comprised of hospitals; satellite hospitals; clinics; or other facilities devoted to the provision of health care services intended to improve the physical, spiritual, emotional, or mental health of those persons utilizing such services, or of services to prevent sickness, injury, or disease, including those which are intended to promote a healthful lifestyle, and such other facilities or services as the system board shall deem appropriate to provide a full range of health care services to the population the public health care system may serve. The system board is authorized to construct and equip the necessary buildings

for the aforesaid purposes and to construct extensions, additions, and improvements thereto from time to time, and to lease as lessee or lessor, or purchase or sell any land or any interest in land. The system board is authorized and empowered to carry out its functions directly or indirectly through other companies it controls through joint ventures or partnerships with other public or private organizations.

Section 5. In the event that it should become necessary to acquire any land for health system purposes under the authority of this act by eminent domain, the proceedings therefor shall be instituted by the system board and prosecuted in the manner provided by general law.

Section 6. (1) The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors shall consist of ten directors, comprised of two directors from each of the five county health system districts, the boundaries of which have been established by resolution of the system board. Said directors shall be residents and registered voters of Lee County. Directors from the five county health system districts shall be residents of the district from which they are elected and which they represent. System board members shall be elected on a nonpartisan basis by a vote of the electorate of the county as a whole and shall serve staggered 4-year terms. Members of the Hospital Board of Directors of Lee County holding office on the effective date of this act shall continue to hold office for the terms to which they were elected or appointed. Thereafter, directors of the Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors shall be elected at the general election on a nonpartisan basis for staggered 4-year terms.

(2) The five county health system districts provided for herein shall have such boundaries as exist on the effective date of this act. The system board may at any time, by resolution, make any change which it deems necessary in the boundaries of any or all of the five county health system districts after a public hearing held by the system board, and the publication of notice at least once in a newspaper published in Lee County 15 days prior to said public hearing; provided that such districts shall be as nearly equal in population as practicable, and provided further that no change that would affect the residence qualifications of any incumbent director shall disqualify such incumbent director during the term for which the director is elected. Changes in district boundaries shall be shown by resolutions included within the minutes of the system board. District boundary changes shall be made only in odd-numbered years.

(3) Each candidate for election to the system board shall pay a qualifying fee and qualify during the qualification period as provided by general law. To qualify, each candidate shall sign an oath that he or she is a legal resident of Lee County, that he or she is a citizen of the United States, that he or she is a duly qualified elector in the state, that he or she has not violated any of the laws of the state relating to electors and to the registration of electors, that he or she is seeking election as a director of the Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors from the county health system district he or she resides in, and that he or she has taken the oath as required by section 876.05, Florida Statutes, although the said candidate is not considered a county or state officer. The candidate shall sign an oath that he or she is a

legal resident of the county health system district of Lee County in which he or she is running for election.

(4) Any vacancy in the office of director shall be filled as provided by law.

Section 7. The system board shall elect annually from its members a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, who shall be the officers of the system board. The system board shall cause true and accurate minutes and records to be kept of all business transacted by the system board and shall keep full, true, and complete books of accounts and records, which minutes, records, and books of account and the current line item budget shall at all reasonable times be open and subject to inspection and copying pursuant to the provisions of the constitution and laws of Florida. All meetings of the system board shall be open to the general public pursuant to general law. At least once a year the system board shall cause the financial records and accounts of the health care system to be audited by a certified public accountant authorized to practice public accounting in Florida and a certified public account audit report to be prepared. The audit, together with a copy of the health system's current annual budget, shall be filed annually with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Lee County.

Section 8. Lee Memorial Health System directors shall receive an annual compensation of up to \$10,000 for services as members of such board, if such compensation is approved by the board. On the first day of each fiscal year following the effective date of this act, the limit shall increase by an amount equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index during the prior fiscal year published by the United States Department of Labor. Directors shall be reimbursed for travel pursuant to section 112.061, Florida Statutes, as the same may be amended or recodified from time to time, and, in addition, shall be reimbursed for mileage expenses and travel expenses incurred in attending meetings of the Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors or its committees, notwithstanding that the meetings are held in Lee County, Florida. The system board may adopt policies, procedures, guidelines, and rules that it deems appropriate which will grant the system board members the same privileges, benefits, and allowances that are provided to the Lee Memorial Health System medical staff and volunteers. The system board may adopt a policy that permits board members to participate in the health system's health insurance program for system employees, provided that the cost of such health insurance shall be paid by the board member electing to participate in such plan, said cost to be not less than that set for employees. Each Lee Memorial Health System director shall post a bond as required by general law for the faithful performance of his or her duties.

Section 9. The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors shall establish and authorize a medical staff to direct and control practitioners with privileges to perform professional services in the hospitals and other facilities operated by the system board. The system board may establish bylaws, rules, and regulations governing the organization of such medical staffs, the appointment and reappointment of such medical staffs, the disciplining or removal of medical staff members, the delineation of medical staff privileges, the professional duties of members of the medical staffs, and such other matters as the system board may address so that the health and well-being of patients and the best interests of the hospital and other facilities

authorized pursuant to this act may at all times be served. The system board shall have the ultimate authority regarding the medical staffs in the Lee Memorial Health System.

Section 10. The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors shall have the authority to operate and conduct the business of the public health system, and consistent therewith, shall have the following powers:

(1) The system board is authorized to pay all expenses of operation of the Lee Memorial Health System and all other necessary expenses incurred, including the fees and expenses of attorneys retained by the system board or the chief executive officer of the Lee Memorial Health System, in the transaction of the business of the public health care system, and in carrying out and accomplishing the purposes of this act.

(2) The Lee Memorial Health System may sue and be sued in the name of Lee Memorial Health System; provided that in any suit, a change in personnel of the system board shall not abate the suit, which shall proceed as if such change had not taken place. In all suits against the Lee Memorial Health System, service of process shall be had on the chief executive officer of the hospital, or in his absence on any officer of the system board.

(3) To the fullest extent permitted by the state law, the system board may create, be a voting member of, choose directors to serve on the boards of, be a partner in, or participate in or control, any venture, corporation, partnership, or other organization, public or private, which the system board finds operates for the purposes consistent with, and in furtherance of, the purposes and best interests of the Lee Memorial Health System.

(4) The system board may make, or authorize its chief executive officer to make, contracts of all kinds, including, but not limited to, the sale or purchase of real property and may enter into leases of real and personal property of any kind or description, either as lessor or lessee.

(5) The system board is authorized to accept gifts, bequests, grants, endowments, and conveyances from any source.

(6) The system board is authorized and empowered, in order to provide for and carry out the work of this act, to borrow money from time to time and in accordance with the constitution and law, and to issue the notes or bonds of the Lee Memorial Health System upon such terms and upon such rates of interest as the system board may deem advisable, to the fullest extent permitted by general law.

(7) The system board may enter into any and all types of derivative agreements as may be used by prudent borrowers, lenders, or investors, which are intended to minimize the risk of financial loss or maximize the financial return in connection with its bonds, notes, or investments, or for any other purpose.

(8) The system board may, or may authorize its chief executive officer to, settle or compromise any claim, suit, or action brought against the Lee Memorial Health System or any of its subsidiaries, or affiliated organizations, or any of its directors, officers, or employees when such claim, suit, or

action arises out of such directors', officers', or employees' acts or omissions in the course of employment or the performance of official duties, consistent with the provisions of the Florida Waiver of Sovereign Immunity Act, as such act may be in effect at the time of such settlement or compromise. This subsection shall not be construed as authorizing or requiring any settlement in excess of those limits imposed by the foregoing general act.

(9) The system board may take any other action consistent with the efficient and effective operation of the public health care system provided for by this act, consistent with the constitution and laws of Florida.

Section 11. The public health care system established under this act shall be primarily for the use and benefit of the residents of Lee County, but exists to provide health care services to all persons, including nonresidents of Lee County, who may seek such services. Persons seeking care may be admitted to Lee Memorial Health System hospitals or treated at its other facilities subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the system board. The system board may establish policies providing for the treatment without charge of those patients who, after reasonable inquiry, are found by Lee Memorial Health System management to be without the means to pay. The system board may, from time to time, establish guidelines for the hospital management in making such inquiry and determinations. The Lee Memorial Health System is authorized to collect from patients who are found to have the means to pay, such charges as the system board may, in its sole discretion, from time to time establish. The Lee Memorial Health System is authorized to bill and receive payment from insurance companies, governmental agencies, or other sources for treatment and care of patients or for other purposes.

Section 12. The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors may hire or appoint a chief executive officer, who shall have the title of president. The system board may make and adopt, or authorize the president to adopt such bylaws, rules, regulations, guidelines, or policies for its own guidance and for the organization, management, and operation of health care system facilities and services as may be deemed necessary for the efficient and economic conduct thereof. Subject to the annual health system budget and policy established by the system board, the president shall have the authority to see to the hiring or retention of such personnel as may be deemed necessary for the efficient management and operation of the public health care system and its subsidiaries and affiliated organizations; and to the firing or termination of such personnel. The president shall recommend the adoption of such general policies by the system board as may be deemed necessary and appropriate for the day-to-day management and operation of the hospital and its other facilities, and the system board may authorize the president to see to the establishment of specific policies, procedures, guidelines, and rules regarding such management and operation. The system board may authorize and delegate the enforcement of all such policies, procedures, guidelines, and rules to the president, who may, in turn, authorize and delegate enforcement of the same to such assistants as the president may deem appropriate or necessary. The president may delegate to assistants and subordinates the authority to manage the day-to-day operations

of the public health care system, consistent with the president's authority as delegated by the system board pursuant to this section.

Section 13. Funds of the Lee Memorial Health System may be paid out only upon drafts, checks, or warrants signed by persons duly authorized by the system board to execute such instruments for purposes consistent with this act. The system board may adopt rules for the payment of lesser sums in cash, and a petty cash fund or funds may be established for such purpose with the maximum amount payable in cash in one transaction fixed by the system chief executive officer. All funds of the system board shall be deposited in banks which are qualified under state law to accept deposits of public funds. The system board may deposit or invest its surplus funds in interest-bearing accounts, instruments, or securities, to the fullest extent permitted by general law. In addition, the system board may invest its surplus funds as follows:

(1) Without limitation in:

(a) Bonds, notes, or other obligations of the United States or those guaranteed by the United States or for which the credit of the United States is pledged for the payment of the principal and interest or dividends thereof.

(b) State bonds pledging the full faith and credit of the state and revenue bonds additionally secured by the full faith and credit of the state.

(c) Bonds of the several counties or districts in the state containing a pledge of the full faith and credit of the county or district involved.

(d) Savings accounts in, or certificates of deposit of, any bank, savings bank, or savings and loan association incorporated under the laws of the United States doing business and situated in this state, the accounts of which are insured by the Federal Government or an agency thereof, in an amount that does not exceed 15 percent of the net worth of the institution, provided such savings accounts and certificates of deposit are secured in the manner prescribed in chapter 280, Florida Statutes.

(e) Obligations of the Federal Farm Credit Banks and obligations of the Federal Home Loan Bank and its district banks.

(f) Obligations of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation including participation certificates.

(g) Obligations guaranteed by the Government National Mortgage Association.

(h) Commercial paper of prime quality of the highest letter and numerical rating as provided for by at least one nationally recognized rating service.

(i) Time drafts or bills of exchange drawn on and accepted by a commercial bank, otherwise known as banker's acceptances, which are accepted by a member bank of the Federal Reserve System having total deposits of not less than \$400 million.

(j) Short-term obligations not authorized elsewhere in this section, to be purchased individually or in pooled accounts or other collective investment funds, for the purpose of providing liquidity to any fund or portfolio.

(k) Securities of, or other interest in, any open-end or closed-end management type investment company or investment trust registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, 15 U.S.C. ss. 80a-1 et seq., as amended from time to time, provided that the portfolio of such investment company or investment trust is limited to obligations of the United States Government or any agency or instrumentality thereof and to repurchase agreements fully collateralized by such United States Government obligations and provided that such investment company or investment trust takes delivery of such collateral either directly or through an authorized custodian.

(2) With no more than 25 percent of its funds in:

(a) Bonds, notes, or obligations of any municipality or political subdivision or any agency or authority of this state, if such obligations are rated in any one of the three highest ratings by two nationally recognized rating services. However, if only one nationally recognized rating service shall rate such obligations, then such rating service must have rated such obligations in any one of the two highest classifications heretofore mentioned.

(b) Notes secured by first mortgages on Florida real property, insured or guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) Mortgage pass-through certificates, meaning certificates evidencing ownership of an undivided interest in pools of conventional mortgages on real property which is improved by a building or buildings used for residential purposes for one to four families when:

1. Such real property is located in this state;

2. Such mortgages are originated by one or more banks or savings and loan associations organized under the laws of this state, by national banks or federal savings and loan associations having their principal place of business in this state, or by a lender that is approved by the Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the participation in any mortgage insurance program under the National Housing Act and has its principal place of business in this state, or by any combination thereof; and

3. Such mortgages are transferred or assigned to a corporate trustee acting for the benefit of the holders of such certificates.

(d) Obligations of the Federal National Mortgage Association.

(e) Group annuity contracts of the pension investment type with insurers licensed to do business in this state, except that amounts invested by the board with any one insurer shall not exceed 3 percent of its assets.

(f) Certain interest in real property and related personal property, including mortgages and related instruments on commercial or industrial real

property, with provisions for equity or income participation or with provisions for convertibility to equity ownership; and interest in collective investment funds. Associated expenditures for acquisition and operation of assets purchased under this provision shall be included as a part of the cost of the investment.

1. The title to real property acquired under this paragraph shall be vested in the name of the respective fund.

2. For purposes of taxation of property owned by any fund, the provisions of section 196.199(2)(b), Florida Statutes, do not apply.

3. Real property acquired under the provisions of this paragraph shall not be considered state lands or public lands and property as defined in chapter 253, Florida Statutes, and the provisions of that chapter do not apply to such real property.

(g) General obligations backed by the full faith and credit of a foreign government which has not defaulted on similar obligations for a minimum period of 25 years prior to purchase of the obligation and has met its payments of similar obligations when due.

(h) Obligations of agencies of the government of the United States, provided such obligations have been included in and authorized by the Florida Retirement System Total Fund Investment Plan established in section 215.475, Florida Statutes.

(i) United States dollar-denominated obligations by foreign governments, or political subdivisions or agencies thereof, or foreign corporations or foreign commercial entities.

(3) With no more than 50 percent of its funds in common stock, preferred stock, and interest-bearing obligations of a corporation having an option to convert into common stock, provided:

(a) The corporation is organized under the laws of the United States, any state or organized territory of the United States, or the District of Columbia.

(b) The corporation is listed on any one or more of the recognized national stock exchanges in the United States and conforms with the periodic reporting requirements under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

The system board shall not invest more than 10 percent of the equity assets of its funds in the common stock, preferred stock, and interest-bearing obligations having an option to convert into common stock, of any one issuing corporation; and the system board shall not invest more than 3 percent of the equity assets of any funds in such securities of any one issuing corporation except to the extent a higher percentage of the same issue is included in a nationally recognized market index, based on market values at least as broad as the Standard and Poor's Composite Index of 500 Companies, or except upon a specific finding by the system board that such higher percentage is in the best interest of the system board. The system board may only sell listed options to reduce investment risks, to improve cash flow, or to



provide alternative means for the purchase and sale of underlying investment securities. Reversing transactions may be made to close out existing option positions.

(4) With no more than 80 percent of its funds, in interest-bearing obligations with fixed maturity of any corporation or commercial entity within the United States.

For the purpose of determining the above investment limitations, the value of bonds shall be the par value thereof, and the value of evidences of ownership and interest-bearing obligations having an option to convert to ownership shall be the cost thereof. Investments in any securities authorized by this section may be under repurchase agreements or reverse repurchase agreements. Investments made by the system board may be designated to maximize the financial return to the fund consistent with the risks incumbent in each investment and shall be designed to preserve an appropriate diversification of the portfolio. The system board is authorized to buy and sell futures and options, provided the instruments for such purpose are traded on a securities exchange or board of trade regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, unless the system board by rule authorizes a different market. The system board is authorized to invest in domestic or foreign national principal contracts.

Section 14. For the purpose of providing funds for any purpose that the system board may deem advisable, the system board is authorized to issue revenue bonds of the Lee Memorial Health System pursuant to the constitution and laws of Florida, in such amounts as the system board may by resolution establish. The principal and interest on such bonds shall be paid from the revenues of the Lee Memorial Health System.

Section 15. For the purpose of providing funds to be used in connection with the Lee Memorial Health System, including the acquisition of land or any interest in land, the system board, at its discretion, is authorized to issue general obligation bonds in amounts necessary to pay the cost thereof. Said bonds shall be issued only after their issuance shall have been approved by a majority of the votes cast at an election of the qualified electors residing in Lee County. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the election concerning the issuance of bonds may be held on the same day as an election held in said county for any other purpose, whether such other election be a primary, general, or special election. The system board may submit the question of issuing bonds authorized by this act at one election and others thereof at one or more subsequent elections. The ballots used at any such election shall state the maximum amount of bonds proposed to be issued. In the event that at any election the issuance of bonds under the authority of this act should not be approved, or if any such election be invalid or ineffective for any reason, the system board may call another election at any time for the same purpose. Except as otherwise provided herein, any election concerning the issuance of bonds as aforesaid shall be called and held and the result thereof canvassed, declared, and recorded in the manner prescribed by chapter 100, Florida Statutes.

Section 16. When any bonds have been issued pursuant to section 15 hereof, there shall be levied and assessed annually, so long as any of said bonds or the interest thereon remain unpaid, an ad valorem tax upon all taxable property, not exempt by law, in Lee County, which tax shall be sufficient in amount to pay the interest on said bonds as it becomes due and the principal thereof at maturity. Such tax shall be levied, assessed, and collected by the same officers and in the same manner as other county ad valorem taxes are levied, assessed, and collected.

Section 17. The bonds herein authorized to be issued by this act may be issued and sold at one time or from time to time, and shall bear such date or dates, be in such denomination or denominations, be payable at such place, bear interest at such fixed or variable rate or rates, and bear such maturity dates as may be permitted by general law, with or without the right of prior redemption, all as may be determined by resolution of the system board, which resolution may prescribe the manner and terms of redemption of any bonds which the system board may elect to make redeemable. The bonds may be issued in coupon form or non-coupon form, may be validated as permitted by law and shall bear the seal of the Lee Memorial Health System. Neither the provisions of this section nor any other provision of this act shall impair, abate, suspend, or invalidate any bond or other debt obligation of the Hospital Board of Directors of Lee County issued prior to the effective date of this act. The Lee Memorial Health System Board of Directors shall, without interruption, continue to have all duties and responsibilities regarding such bonds or obligations as were had by the Hospital Board of Directors of Lee County.

Section 18. Lee Memorial Health System shall be entitled to a lien for all reasonable charges for hospital, physician, and other health care services provided by the Lee Memorial Health System to ill or injured persons, upon the proceeds of all causes of action, suits, claims, counterclaims, and demands accruing to said persons or to their legal representatives, and upon all judgments, settlements, and settlement agreements rendered or entered into by virtue thereof, on account of injuries giving rise to such causes of action, suits, claims, counterclaims, demands, judgments, settlements, or settlement agreements, which injuries shall have necessitated such hospital, physician, and other services provided to such ill or injured persons. Lee Memorial Health System shall perfect and be entitled to enforce such lien as follows:

(1) In order to perfect the lien provided for herein, the Lee Memorial Health System chief executive officer or an employee or employees of the Lee Memorial Health System authorized by the chief executive officer shall, before or within 10 days after such ill or injured person shall have been discharged from a Lee Memorial Health System hospital, file in the office of the Lee County Clerk of Circuit Court, a verified written notice of lien setting forth the name and address of the ill or injured person as they may appear in the records of said health system hospital, the name and location of said hospital, the name and address of the employee or other authorized person preparing the notice of lien, the date of admission to said hospital and the date of discharge from said hospital, the amount claimed to be due for hospital, physician, and other services provided, and to the best knowledge

of the person preparing the notice of lien, the names and addresses of all persons, firms, or corporations who may be claimed by such ill or injured person or by the legal representative of such person, to be liable on account of such illness or injuries. When the notice of lien is filed, a copy thereof shall be sent by United States Postal Service to the ill or injured person, to said person's attorney, if known, and to all persons, firms, or corporations named in such notice of lien. The filing and mailing of the notice of lien in accordance with this section shall be notice thereof to all persons, firms, or corporations who may be liable on account of such illness or injuries, and to any other persons, firms, or corporations that may have an interest in the aforesaid causes of action, suits, claims, counterclaims, demands, judgments, settlements, or settlement agreements, whether or not they are named in the notice of lien, and whether or not a copy of the notice of lien shall have been received by them.

(2) The Lee County Clerk of Circuit Court shall endorse on the written notice of lien the date and hour of filing and shall record said notice of lien in the Official Records of Lee County. The Clerk of Circuit Court shall be entitled to a fee from the Lee Memorial Health System for filing and recording the notice of lien that shall be the same fee as provided by general law for the filing and recording of other instruments.

(3) No release or satisfaction of any cause of action, suit, claim, counterclaim, demand, judgment, settlement, or settlement agreement shall be valid or effectual as against the lien of Lee Memorial Health System unless the lienholder shall join therein or execute a release of its lien prior to the payment of any proceeds thereof. Any acceptance of a release or satisfaction of any cause of action, suit, claim, counterclaim, demand, judgment, settlement, or settlement agreement in the absence of a release or satisfaction of the lien of Lee Memorial Health System shall prima facie constitute an impairment of such lien and the lienholder shall be entitled to a cause of action for damages against any and all persons, firms, or corporations giving or accepting such release or satisfaction, or paying or accepting the proceeds from the same. In such action, Lee Memorial Health System may recover the full amount of its charges for such hospital, physician, or other health care services; regardless of the amount of proceeds paid or received in impairment of its lien. Satisfaction of a judgment rendered in favor of Lee Memorial Health System in such action shall operate as a satisfaction of the lien. The action by the lienholder shall be brought in the court in Lee County having jurisdiction of the amount of the lienholder's claim. If Lee Memorial Health System shall prevail in such action, it shall be entitled to recover from the defendant or defendants, in addition to costs otherwise allowable by law, all reasonable attorney fees and expenses.

(4) No person shall be entitled to recover or receive damages based on the expense of hospital, physician, or other health care services provided by Lee Memorial Health System unless that person shall affirmatively show that Lee Memorial Health System's charges have been paid. Provided, however, that in any action, suit, or counterclaim brought on account of illness or injury, the plaintiff or counterclaimant may include as an item of damages the expense of such hospital, physician, or other health care services provided by Lee Memorial Health System, if prior to trial he or she shall have

notified Lee Memorial Health System in writing of the pendency of such action, suit, or counterclaim; whereupon the lienholder shall have the right, without leave of court, to intervene in the case and prove the amount of its charges for such hospital, physician, or other health care services. Any judgment rendered in favor of the plaintiff or counterclaimant shall provide that the amount proved by the lienholder to be due shall be deducted from the damages awarded and paid to the Lee Memorial Health System.

(5) The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to accidents or injuries within the purview of the workers' compensation laws of Florida.

Section 19. In the event of a conflict of the provisions of this act with the provisions of any other act, the provisions of this act shall control to the extent of such conflict.

Section 20. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 7, 2000.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 7, 2000.