



Carolina Health Centers, Inc. (CHC), a federally qualified health center serving the Lakelands of South Carolina since 1977, owns and operates twelve primary care practices, three of which are in Laurens County including two in the town of Clinton:

HomeTown Pediatrics (HTP) was opened in 2011 in response to a request from Laurens County Hospital when the only pediatric practice in the area ceased providing emergency room coverage or inpatient hospital care for children and adolescents. HTP began with only one pediatrician in 2011, and due to the high demand for pediatric care in the area, has grown to include 4 pediatricians and a part-time pediatric nurse practitioner. The practice is currently located in a building purchased by CHC in 2015 that is designed to accommodate only two full time medical providers. The space constraints limit the number of new patients the practice is able to accept. With the increasing volume of deliveries at The Birthplace at Prisma Health Laurens County Hospital, demand for pediatric care is growing proportionately.

Laurens County Community Care Center, known as LC4, was developed in collaboration with Laurens County Hospital with the goal of reducing the use of the hospital's emergency department for primary and preventive care. Located in space leased from the hospital and contiguous to the emergency department, LC4 began seeing patients in 2012. The goal was to provide same day services and that would divert non-emergency patients away from the more cost intensive services of an emergency department and establish patients with a primary care provider, thereby reducing future use of the emergency department for primary and preventive care. As a result of the referrals over the last 10 years, LC4 has a large profile of established patients, which is limiting capacity to provide same day services and accommodate the high volume of referrals from the emergency department.

Lakelands Family Practice and Pediatric Center was originally opened in 2006 under the name Lakelands Family Practice. Located more than 15 miles from healthcare facilities in either Greenwood or Clinton, the practice has operated as



a single provider family medicine practice for the past 16 years. In response to identified community need for pediatric care located closer to the Cross Hill community and to reduce the overcrowding of HomeTown Pediatrics, a pediatrician was moved to Lakelands and the practice was rebranded as Lakelands Family Practice and Pediatrics Center.

Identified Need and Strategic Goals:

- Increased space to accommodate current and growing demand for pediatrics.
- A stand-alone family medicine practice location located close to the hospital and aligned with LC4. The care of individuals referred from the emergency room who become established patients would be transferred to this aligned practice site, enabling LC4 to increase access to same day care for those continuing to use the emergency room for primary and preventive care.
- A community pharmacy owned and operated by CHC and ensuring access to affordable prescription medication for uninsured, underinsured, and low-income patients. CHC currently owns and operates two Carolina Community Pharmacy locations and delivers prescriptions to CHC patients at all practice locations in outlying rural areas. The greatest number of daily deliveries (40%) are to LC4. In addition, because prescriptions written for children are most often for an acute illness and needed same day, the families at HomeTown Pediatrics often are unable to receive their prescriptions through CHC's next day delivery service and therefore, do not benefit from the available discounts.

The Board of Directors for Carolina Health Centers, Inc. evaluated the above need to accommodate expansion of primary care services in the Clinton community and incorporated the above as priorities in Carolina Health Centers' 2022-25 Strategic Plan.

Proposed Plan for Increasing Capacity to Address Unmet Need:

Purchase land and construct a building that will accommodate all services: Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Carolina Community Pharmacy. The current LC4 site located within the hospital and contiguous to the emergency department will



remain open but transition to focus exclusively on the original goal of providing same day primary care services to reduce the unnecessary and costly use of the emergency department for routine primary care and non-emergent illness and injury. The benefits of locating all three services in one building include:

- Inclusion of clinical pharmacy as a core component of the primary care medical home. A co-located health center pharmacy will ensure all eligible patients have access to affordable prescription medication through CHC's participation in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. In addition, it will enable direct and timely collaboration between medical providers and clinical pharmacists to promote optimal pharmaceutical care. The availability of clinical pharmacists to provide detailed patient education on their pharmaceutical treatment will assist with medication adherence and drive improved health outcomes.
- The co-location of Family Medicine with Pediatrics supports family centered care, enabling all members of a family to establish their medical home in the same location. Further, it enables consultation across departments to identify and address social determinants of health. Finally, it supports the transition of care when a pediatric patient reaches adulthood.
- The co-location of all services allows for cross-training and optimization of staff resulting in greater cost efficiency.

Projected Cost:

Land and site work:	\$ 700,000
Building Construction (15,000 sq. ft. @ \$267 per foot):	\$ 4,000,000
Equipment:	<u>\$ 400,000</u>
Total Projected Cost	\$ 5,100,000

For more information:

Sue Veer, MBA

President and CEO

sveer@carolinahealthcenters.org

864.554.7102