

# AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST HOMETOWN

A weekly report on The Villages' efforts to become "America's Healthiest Hometown" compiled by Daily Sun Ombudsman **Larry D. Croom**. Email [larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:larry.croom@thevillagesmedia.com). Or call him at 753-1119, ext. 9366.

Contact The Villages Health at 352-674-1700 or visit the website at [thevillageshealth.com](http://thevillageshealth.com).

### Did you know?

Colony Care Center Manager Autumn Tripp is a huge fan of the 1989 hit movie "When Harry Met Sally," which starred Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan.

### Health Care Q&A

## All About Care Center Manager Jennifer Pavlik

Primary care doctors, specialists and other medical providers have been recruited as part of an initiative to revamp health care right here in Florida's Friendliest Hometown. The Villages Health is bringing in family doctors, care providers and specialists who will work as a team, all in the best interests of serving patients. This weekly feature will introduce these innovative medical providers who have joined this effort.

### Why did you decide to become a care center manager?

My experience is within the medical environment. I enjoy working with patients. I enjoy working with physicians. People are really important to me. Patients are important. Far too much, unfortunately, I've seen a lot of jaded care provided to patients. So I want to change that. I want to be part of a different focus. And, of course, because I have experience in it, it's comfortable to me. When you're comfortable, it's a natural fit to continue doing what you're comfortable doing. However, I have found with The Villages Health, it really pushes you outside your box – but in a good way. It really pushes you to be better, to do better. There's a lot going on here, but it's thrilling. It's thrilling to be doing something new.

### What is your favorite part of being a care center manager?

The interaction with the people. The interaction with the patients, the staff and knowing that we're changing things. We're making things better. As we interact with one another and the patients, we're making a difference by making sure that they come first and that they feel that in the way we deal with them. I really enjoy that. I think it's important for people to feel that they're important, not that they're just another person coming through the door, signing in and showing up for



### Care center:

Mulberry Grove

Age: 38

### Health care experience:

14 years (Started as a receptionist and worked her way up through the ranks. Has worked in internists' offices, in specialty care and with established colorectal surgery practice in Orlando until 2008.)

August 2008-June

2010: Manager of physician relations, Central Florida Health Alliance Physician Services Team  
July 2010-August 2014: Manager, CFHA Medical Group

their appointment. They're important.

### What is your personal philosophy on health care?

We're here for the patient. We're here to heal them. We also have a responsibility to keep them accountable for their care as well and to help with that. It's a collaborative approach. It's not just us telling them what they need to do. We need them to engage with us.

### Creating America's Healthiest Hometown

## Why is the use of physician extenders – nurse practitioners and physician assistants – so important?

“Physician extenders are an amazing group of people. They allow us to have a lot of acute care access. The physicians see a lot of new patients, especially as they're building their practice. And they see some of the return patients as well. But by having those extenders, that's exactly what they do. They're just an extension of the physician – all very well-trained, personable, wonderful, passionate people. They're going to provide a great level of care to the patients.”

Registered Nurse  
**Deneal Sullivan,**  
Pinellas Care  
Center manager



### Care Centers in The Villages

#### Primary care

**The Villages Health Colony Care Center**

280 Farner Place, 352-674-1710

**The Villages Health Santa Barbara Care Center**

1575 Santa Barbara Blvd., 352-674-1740

**The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center**

2485 Pinellas Place, 352-674-1720

**The Villages Health Mulberry Grove Care Center**

8877 S.E. 165th Mulberry Lane, 352-674-1750

**The Villages Health Lake Sumter Creekside Care Center**

1050 Old Camp Road, Building 100, 352-674-1760



Bill Mitchell / Daily Sun

Dr. Reed Tuckson, right, offers comments on the health care initiative that's sweeping through Florida's Friendliest Hometown during a recent AM-640 WVLG interview. Tuckson, who was visiting the radio station along with Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages Health, is the author of a book titled 'The Doctor in the Mirror' that was the basis of his recent presentation at Savannah Center.

# Community Support

## Longtime health care expert Tuckson offers praise for Villages connectedness

By **LARRY D. CROOM**  
DAILY SUN OMBUDSMAN

### THE VILLAGES

It's no secret that health care expert and author Dr. Reed Tuckson is a fan of Florida's Friendliest Hometown and the health care initiative that's well underway here.

"This is a phenomenal concept, because what I'm seeing is a learning laboratory that blends together the best in health promotion and disease prevention with the best in person-centered medical care," said the author of "The Doctor in the Mirror" during a recent interview at AM-640 WVLG. "Meeting the comprehensive needs of the individual is really revolutionary and quite exciting."

Tuckson, who recently put on a presentation at Savannah Center about becoming "Dr. You," said one of the most impressive things about The Villages is the social connectedness factor that was shown to be literally off the charts in a 2012 USF Health study completed by more than 33,000 Villagers.

"The model here is, can we find a way to have a community be committed to helping each individual live the healthiest possible life?" he said. "We can do a lot on our own. We have the choice to make decisions on our own behalf. But what you also need to really get it done is to have a family, a community, an environment that supports you in doing the right thing. That's what you're doing here."

Tuckson, who serves as managing director of Tuckson Connections and is the former executive vice president and chief of medical affairs for UnitedHealth Group, said that, in addition to living healthy lifestyles, it's essential for residents to choose the



George Horsford / Daily Sun

Dr. Tuckson, left, enjoys talking with the audience gathered at Savannah Center before the start of his recent 'Dr. You' program.

best doctor that meets their individual needs and then form a solid relationship with that physician.

"It is so sad for me to see people go to the doctor's office and become so intimidated by the doctor or the hospital that we just get so quiet," he said. "We don't tell anybody what's really on our mind. We don't want to talk about those really personal symptoms. We don't listen. And when the experience is over, it's often unsatisfying."

In essence, Tuckson added, it's crucial to bring your "A" game when visiting the doctor. "Otherwise, we're not making the health system respond to our needs as individuals," he said. "Let's remember, the most important star in the show is not the doctor or the hospital. It's you."

When it comes to medical care, Tuckson said patients shouldn't be wowed or enamored

with technology alone.

"The best machines in the world mean nothing if we don't have the desire and the will to actually use the technology in the right way," he said. "The best technology in the world should be unnecessary if we do the things to keep the disease from progressing to need the technology in the first place."

In other words, Tuckson added, always remember what's really important – you. "Let's keep focused on how we behave, how we choose to live our lives, the choices we make, the chances we take," he said. "Those are the things that are key."

Along those lines, Tuckson said a great thing about The Villages is that once patients see their doctors and have a plan to move forward, they can do so in a community environment where they can really be successful in improving

their health.

"Then, depending on our own biology and the things that are going on in our bodies, we'll be able to cure our problem, if not keep the problem low, so that we then don't see it progress to something terrible," he said. "Then we can get back to the business of living full, healthy, wonderful, complete lives."

Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages Health, agreed, adding that he often points out that his medical providers don't treat conditions like diabetes, heart failure, migraines or arthritis.

"Our patients do and we teach them how," he said. "We enable them to be in charge of their own health and their own health care. And I have never met a community as jazzed and excited to be active participants in owning their own health than the people here. It's a joy."