

# 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**  
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## Primary care centers in The Villages

**Colony Care Center**  
Opened December 2012  
**Santa Barbara Care Center**  
Opening October 2013  
**Pinellas Care Center**  
Opening November 2013  
**Mulberry Grove**  
Opening February 2014  
**Lake Sumter Creekside**  
Opening March 2014

## Fixing health care: All about Dr. Brent Stabler

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

### Why did you become a primary care doctor?

Somebody once told me that family medicine, particularly in primary care, you are the jack of all trades and master of none. That kind of appealed to me, doing a little bit of everything, kind of the way that I thought physicians used to do it a long time ago.

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

My personal philosophy is you are your own best doctor. It’s up to us to guide you, but in the end it’s up to you to do it.

### What is it like to treat such active patients from The Villages who really care about their health?

I cannot describe how happy it makes me to see somebody that’s really active in their health care and really wants to implement some of the things that we talk about. For the most part, they’re very well educated and already know what they need to be doing and sometimes (need) just a little bit of guidance.

### How important is it to have a primary care doctor who knows you well?

I would say that’s probably the most important thing,



**Care Center:** Belleview  
**Age:** 50  
**Undergraduate:** University of Alabama  
**Medical school:** University of Alabama  
**Internship, residency:** University of Arkansas; Spartanburg Family Medicine in South Carolina

especially with relation to all the specialists that are out there. ... We have to coordinate everything and we have to know what’s going on because sometimes what a specialist does, that may be right for the specialty, but it might be something that could conflict with the medicine or something one of the other specialists is doing.



Submitted photo  
Medical professionals gather in the huddle zone at the Colony Care Center. The area is one of many designed to help the team provide excellent patient care.

# Centered on patients

## Villages Health primary care centers carry special designation

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

All primary care centers operating under The Villages Health umbrella proudly boast a special badge of honor.

Those Villages facilities, as well as the Belleview Care Center, are designated by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as patient-centered medical homes. The honor carries with it very specific criteria that must be met, all of which involve care centered around patients and the all-important relationship with their primary care physician.

The Belleview facility, formerly Family Doctors of Belleview, was the first in Florida to receive the honor under strict criteria that was developed in 2011.

Dr. Joe Hildner, chief medical officer of The Villages Health, said patients can expect many positives from practices with the PCMH designation, including having multiple ways to reach their physicians.

“After hours, on weekends,

not just by phone but by email, by website, you need to be available,” he said. “If you call today about a migraine that’s killing you, we shouldn’t be saying ‘we’ll see you a week from Friday.’”

Hildner said population management – treating everybody that has a certain condition the same way – is also a requirement.

“If there was a right way to take care of every person with emphysema, then let’s

take care of everybody with emphysema that way,” he said.

Hildner said PCMH facilities must also take charge of orchestrating and coordinating care for patients, including when they are referred to specialists, hospitals and physical therapy, to name a few.

PCMH facilities are also expected to have programs and activities that enable patients to take care of themselves and play an active role in their own care.

“We proudly say that we don’t treat diabetes at our practice. We don’t treat heart failure. We don’t treat arthritis,” Hildner said. “Our patients do. We enable them to. We teach them how to be in charge of their own. They don’t come in and say, ‘doc, how I am doing?’ They come in and they tell us how they’re doing.”

Hildner said tracking care and follow-through are also vitally important.

“Most doctor’s offices haven’t really figured out how to keep good, accurate track of all that and a patient-centered medical home has to be able to do that,” he said.

Hildner said, medical staffs

must show continuous quality improvement.

“You’re always looking at how you’re doing things and what we can do better,” he said.

Dr. Elliot Sussman, chair of The Villages Health, said it’s about providing excellent and effective care for patients.

“It means things won’t fall through the cracks,” he said. “When a woman needs a mammogram, she’s going to be told that she needs a mammogram and the results will be provided to her in a timely fashion. And if she doesn’t get the mammogram, she’s going to be reminded, ‘you need a mammogram.’”

Sussman said identifying problems and then educating patients is key and will help prevent other health issues.

“Treat diabetes, you’ll decrease the incidences of problems with vision, problems with your kidneys, problems with your lower extremities and nerves, problems with the buildup of blockages in your coronary arteries and other arteries throughout the body. So it’s really, really important to do that,” he said.

**Next week** Find out all about Dr. Susan Hawley, a physician at Colony Care Center.

### Changing face of health care

## What opportunities will Villagers have?

“The Villages-USF Health partnership is a unique opportunity for an entire community to partner with specialists from the university to create America’s Healthiest Hometown. Medical students and residents complete the picture by ensuring that The Villages will continue to have a pipeline of young doctors and nurses.”



**Dr. Stephen Klasko,**  
dean, USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and CEO of USF Health

## Patient-centered medical home designation: What does it mean to Villages Health doctors?



**Dr. Aya Olejeme,**  
Belleview Care Center

“Overall, I think it’s fantastic to go back to the roots of what health care and patient care is all about, and I love that this place is doing it. I love that I’m here and I’m part of it.”



**Dr. Brooks Betts,**  
Colony Care Center

“If you’re having a problem, come here first and we will guide you through that problem. If we don’t have the expertise to take care of it, we will get you to the proper expertise. This should be your place you come to when you need help.”



**Dr. Susan Hawley,**  
Colony Care Center

“It gets you a chance for you to know the patient better and the patient to know us better. We can provide more services right here in a medically efficient and a cost-efficient manner.”



**Dr. Karla Noel,**  
Colony Care Center

“A lot of different providers will claim to be a patient-centered medical home, but yet they don’t walk the talk. We have the accreditation and we have gone through the process to prove we’re doing it.”



**Dr. Stephen Fischer,**  
Belleview Care Center

“It’s a recognition that in the end, we do what we do for the patient. We’re not doing it for the practice or for the physicians or for the extenders. The patient is at the center of why we do the things we do.”



**Dr. Daniel Whinnen,**  
Belleview Care Center

“It’s nice to know that patients can have one place where they can come to and get all their health care taken care of. I think that’s important for patients, so it’s good to be a part of that.”