



# FY 2018 – 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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**8<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Report  
2018 – 2019**





# HISTORY

In 1993, the State of Florida passed enabling legislation authorizing the creation of rural health networks.

Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. (HRHN) is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit entity that was incorporated in that same year, and, in July 1995, became the first rural health network in Florida to be certified by the State of Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration. Today it is the largest of nine state networks and covers an area of 4,780 square miles.

Our governing body is an 9-member Board of Directors representing rural and urban hospitals, free clinics, local governments, consumers, Emergency Medical Services, an Area Health Education Center, and Community Health Centers. HRHN serves a five-county area including Highlands, DeSoto, Hardee, and the rural portions of Charlotte and Polk Counties.

For over 25 years, HRHN has been actively involved in various aspects of community health planning to help determine the most effective ways to maximize available resources without duplication and to help create effective solutions for identified health concerns impacting our rural communities.

## Network Purpose

...

- Provide a continuum of care for all patients served by the Network.
- Ensure the availability of a wide array of services either directly, by contract, or through referral agreements.
- Reduce outmigration and increase the utilization of statutory rural hospitals and other rural health care providers.
- Enhance access to high quality health care and services.
- Support the economy and protect the health and safety of rural residents.
- Ensure that quality care is efficiently delivered to all persons in rural areas.
- Serve as laboratories to determine the best way of organizing rural health services.

\*Florida Statutes, Chapter 381.0406

# Mission, Vision and Core Values



To improve access to quality health care by implementing creative solutions in collaboration with network members and community partners.

To be a leader of innovative, collaborative, and quality driven rural health initiatives.



**Integrity –**

We encourage the free exchange of ideas in an environment that embraces honesty, fairness, personal responsibility and ethical leadership.

**Ethics –**

We respect honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity, and individual rights and demonstrate this through both our actions and words.

**Collaboration –**

We continually seek opportunities to work in partnership with other organizations and share resources to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community.

**Quality –**

We strive to provide the highest quality products and services that meet the diverse needs of our community.

# 2017-2018 Board of Directors



**Blake Warren,**  
**Board President**  
Executive Director  
Central Florida AHEC



**David Duke,**  
**Board Vice President**  
Retired

## Board Officers



**Heather Stephenson,**  
**Board Secretary/Treasurer**  
Executive Director  
We Care of Central Florida



**Robert Rihn,**  
**Board Past President**  
Executive Director  
Tri-County Human Services, Inc.

## Board Directors

**David K. Robbins II,**  
**Board Member**  
Vice President  
Tampa General Hospital

**Justin Blalock, ARNP,**  
**Board Member**  
ARNP  
Pioneer Medical Center

**Vince Sica,**  
**Board Member**  
President/CEO  
DeSoto Memorial Hospital

**Denise Collazo,**  
**Board Member**  
Center Administrator  
Central Florida Health Care Inc.

**Cathy Exendine, MSN, RN,**  
**Board Member**  
Director of Nursing  
Florida Hospital Wauchula

# Network Membership Benefits

**HRHN** is a community-based organization that relies heavily on participation from local health care providers, government representatives, the business community, churches, social service agencies, and consumers to effectively identify and address the health needs of rural residents. There are specific benefits to membership and support of our mission, including:

## Advocacy

HRHN is an effective voice in the development and support of public policy relating to rural health care issues.

## Funding

HRHN enables existing health care providers to demonstrate to funding sources (such as foundations, corporations, and government) a high degree of cooperation and coordination of services. This is a critical factor when grant requests and budget appropriation decisions are made by funding agencies. HRHN is also a viable source for assistance in obtaining funding from state, federal, and private sources. HRHN can also serve as a fiscal agent to help manage grant funds and required grant reporting.

## Facilitating Partnerships & Program Development

HRHN facilitates communication, program planning, and development between members and community leaders to maximize resources to address identified health needs such as access to primary care, public assistance benefits, health education, prevention services, and similar programs that meet the needs of HRHN's service area. Program development and implementation can be done through contracts, referrals, and direct services.

## Antitrust Protection

HRHN membership allows members to enjoy enhanced freedom from antitrust restrictions because of the legislation creating these Networks across the country. This allows providers to exchange data, set pricing, develop shared systems, share costs, and make in-kind and cash contributions.

## CON Priority

HRHN members receive preference over non-members in the evaluation of Certificate of Need applications.

## Technical Assistance

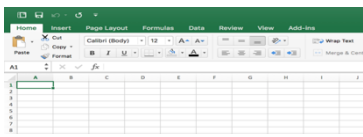
HRHN provides technical assistance to network members in regards to program development, grant funding sources, and grant writing assistance.



# Services Offered

**HRHN, a trusted catalyst to streamlined solutions, is now offering solutions to synergize your business.** We work with you to develop customized solutions to resolve business areas of concern relating to spreadsheet and database management along with business consulting services, including financial management of your grants and contracts, grant writing technical assistance, and beginner Excel training.

## Excel Training



Our Microsoft Excel experts can provide a wide range of Excel consulting services to both large and small businesses. We provide either on-site or virtual consulting based on the client's needs. Whether you need a custom spreadsheet built to collect grant data, time sheets to track employee time by grant, a broken sheet reprogrammed, or basic training on Excel, we can do it.

## Grant Writing



Have a grant you want to go after but don't have as much time as necessary to address the proposal? Let us help! Our team has a strong history of grant writing experience and would love to work with you to write the proposal. We can also assist with final edits and review to ensure you have addressed all points within the grant RFP/RFA.

## Community Health Workers



Since 2008, HRHN has been at the forefront of integrating Community Health Workers (CHW) with chronic disease management services. CHWs complement services delivered through health care providers by supplying more comprehensive and supportive care within a community based setting and providing status updates back to the health care providers. Our CHWs can deliver both long and short term case management in cooperation with the referring health care provider.

## PowerPoint Development



Developing a flexible, highly visual presentation platform can be time-consuming and costly if not managed carefully. We offer experts who can help you develop a customized PowerPoint slide show with appealing results. We will work with you through planning, organizing, and testing your PowerPoint end product.

## Fiscal Management



Accountability, communication, and internal controls are critical in the management of federal, state, and private foundation grant and contract funds. Our organization has the necessary internal controls to ensure your funds are being managed properly.

## Health Education Classes



We offer nutrition classes for adults, with emphasis on chronic disease management, as well as healthy choices classes for youth, ages 11-19 years of age that address goal setting, health, and other topics. All educational classes can be customized and conducted in a variety of settings.

# The DMCP CHW Program

The aim of the Diabetes Master Clinician (DMCP) and Community Health Workers (CHW) Program is to empower and support referred, low-income, underinsured/uninsured, high risk individuals in Highlands and Hardee counties diagnosed with Diabetes or Pre-Diabetes and their families by fostering the requisite skills and behaviors to self-manage their diabetes. The CHWs invite clients to be seen at least six times within one year during which they promote physical activity to their clients, advance the client's knowledge of diabetes, and ensure the client receives important medical tests – all of which ultimately will support a client's ability to self-manage their diabetes. CHWs serve as a link between the provider and patient (referred to as clients at HRHN) to improve health outcomes. CHWs help clients uncover the reasons they may not be in control of their diabetes in a comfortable setting. The DMCP CHW Program is provided through a Florida Blue Foundation Grant.

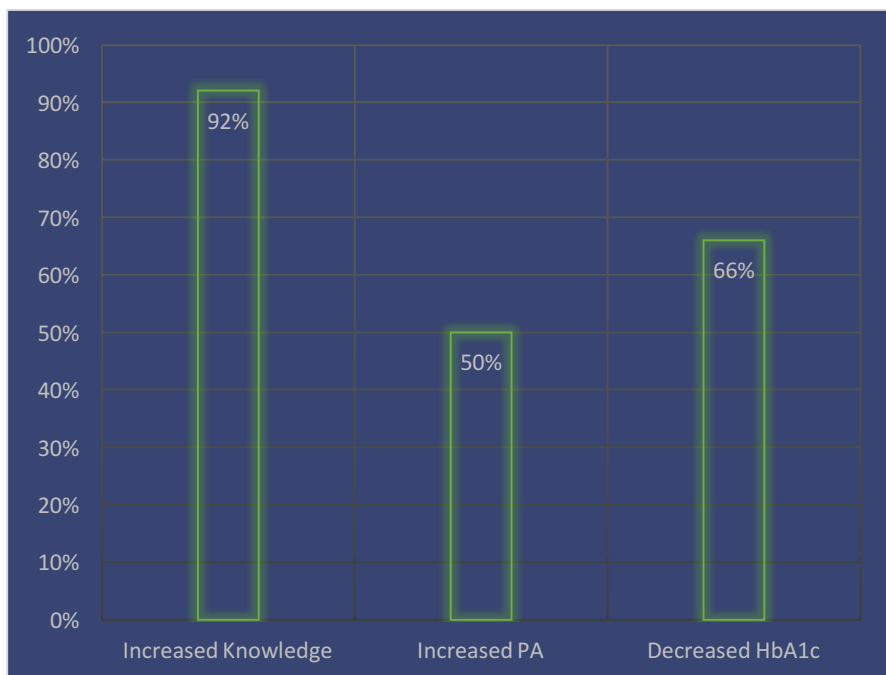
The DMCP CHW Program was conducted from 2015 – 2018 through a partnership with Pioneer Medical Center, Samaritan's Touch Care Center, and Sun N Lake Medical Center. Here are overall results and highlights from the program:

# 222

**Unduplicated Enrollees**

# 54%

**or 119 enrolled clients completed  
at least 6 visits with us**



The demographic breakdown of those served was:

- 60% female and 40% male;
- 57% Hispanic, 26% White, 10% Black, 2% Mixed, 2% Unknown, and 1% each for: Asian, American Indian, and Other.

We also collected information on the type of insurance that enrollees had. The results of that are as follows:

- 45% had No Insurance
- 37% had Public Insurance
- 18% had Private Insurance





# PREP Program Highlights

In 2008, Heartland Rural Health Network began working with community leaders to address the high rates of teen pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections in our rural communities. In 2015, HRHN was awarded a Personal Responsibility Education Program Grant allowing HRHN to partner with the Highlands County School Board to provide in-school sexual health education classes to middle school students during their regular school day. Our curriculum-certified Health Educators provide students with information about sexual health and creating boundaries and goals in their lives, and tools to support students reaching these goals.

Our current curriculum, *Get Real*, emphasizes social and emotional skills as a key component of healthy relationships and responsible decision making. It promotes abstinence from sex as the healthiest choice for adolescents; provides a comprehensive understanding of sexual health, sexuality and protection methods; and supports parents as the primary sexuality educators of their children through family activities that encourage dialogue between students and the caring adults in their lives about sexual health topics.

Over the past **four** years of implementing **this program** the **teen birth rate** has **dropped substantially** in **Highlands County**, approaching the state average. This drop in the birth rate **coincides with annual delivery** of the program.

- UF Annual Evaluation Report Year 4

# 99.3%

Of participants completed 75% or more of the program

# 2,764

The number of youth, 11-19 years of age, who participated in the curriculum programs in Highlands County in the 17-18 School Year

As reported in Pre- and Post-Assessments, the program had a significant and positive effect for the youth at highest risk, those who reported they intended to have sex prior to receiving the program.

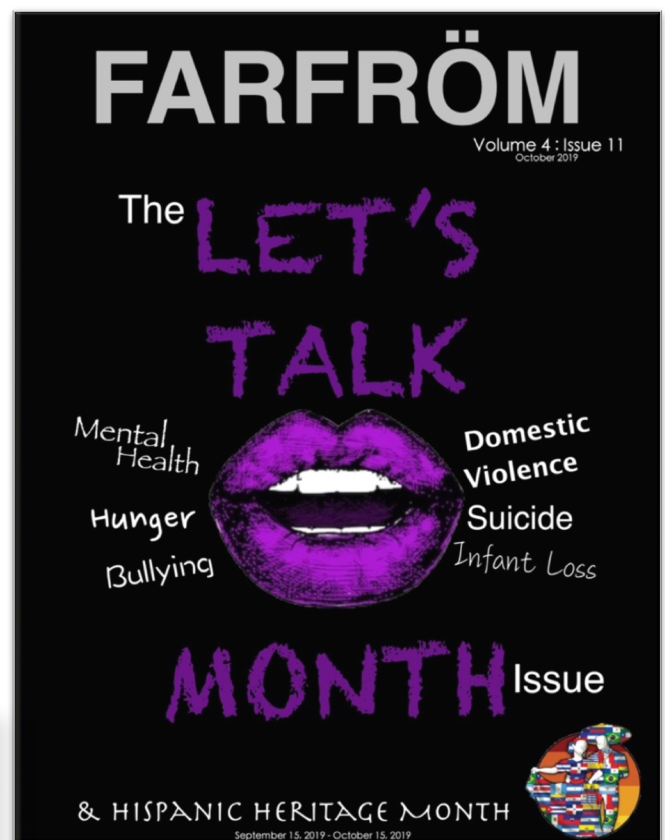
“ Among these youth, 32% reported that they **no longer** intended to **have sex** in the next 6 months **after receiving the program.** ”

# DRUG FREE HIGHLANDS

HRHN, in partnership with Drug Free Highlands (DFH), is the recipient of a federal Drug Free Communities grant through the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. HRHN acts as the fiscal agent for this grant, managing the financial aspects. Based on the fundamental concept that local problems need local solutions, the funds are used to help the coalition engage multiple sectors of the community and utilize a variety of strategies to address local drug problems. The DFH coalition is comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, religious and fraternal organizations, health care and business professionals, law enforcement, and the media. DFH defines itself as a prevention coalition that provides resources, education and programs to support our community in making positive choices as it relates to health and wellness with a focus on substance use/abuse and mental health.



Above: Farfromhunger volunteers and DFH staff adding soil to raised beds in one of the community gardens. From L to R, (Neal Golden, Alana Parker, Michelle Backus and Aisha Alayande).  
Right: Cover page of FARFRÖM magazine.



Drug Free Highlands continues to grow by offering programs and events that speak to the diverse needs of our community. In addition to Backchat, Reading Rounds and Safe Server trainings, two new initiatives have been added: *Art for Happy Minds* and *Farfromhunger*. *Farfromhunger* brings together partners that include Advent Health, Highlands Indivisible, Eatwell Exchange and The Heartland Food Bank. Together, they provide food distribution, nutrition classes, blood pressure testing and information and programs that discuss mental health and substance abuse & misuse. This initiative has also birthed community gardens in food desert neighborhoods. The goal is to meet people where they are and supply them with the tools needed to prevent substance misuse and promote a healthy lifestyle. *Art for Happy Minds* invites community members to create art, color, play with clay, paint, or all of the above. During this time, the organization shares information regarding substance abuse and/or misuse and mental health. Guest speakers who include Art Therapists, Mental Health providers and Prevention Specialists are invited to speak to participants about various topics related to substance abuse, mental health and more.



# Community Health Worker & Central Florida Health Care Pilot Program 2019



Tamara Cruz, lead Community Health Worker  
Heartland Rural Health Network

Heartland Rural Health Network was granted an extension to the funds not used during the DMCP CHW Program to be used to create and run a Pilot Program with our new Diabetes partner, Central Florida Health Care (CFHC) in Highlands and Hardee Counties. This pilot program set out to accomplish the same basic goals as the DMCP CHW Program but on a tighter timeline and with a tweaked approach.

The goals were:

- Enroll between 20 and 24 uncontrolled or newly diagnosed Diabetics (Type 2)
- Have patients commit to 6 visits with the Community Health Worker
- Have at least 75% of enrolled patients complete all visits
- Increase Physical Activity from Pre- to Post-Assessment in at least 55% of program completers, while at least 35% of the remaining maintained their amount of Physical Activity
- Increase Knowledge of common Diabetic Self-Care Topics through targeted educational plans agreed upon with the client during the first visit and as tested through the Pre- and Post-Assessments in 85% of all program completers
- Decrease HbA1c in at least 55% of all completers, as shown in HbA1c test results provided prior to their first CHW Visit compared to test results captured again after the client has completed the program – all test results will be provided by CFHC

Additionally, we added a goal to increase the client's/patient's relationship with their provider. After meeting with CFHC, we both agreed that this goal was important to aim for during this program.

The changes we had to make to this program included asking enrollees to commit to 6 visits at their provider's office with our Community Health Worker, as well as asking that these visits take place every 2 weeks. This drastically shortened our timeline for working with individual patients and dramatically decreased the number of enrollees we were able to serve but was the best option given our budgetary restraints.

The program launched on April 30<sup>th</sup> and client visits began May 2<sup>nd</sup>. As of the end of the fiscal year, Tamara has enrolled 22 patients in the program. We look forward to providing results on this program in the coming fiscal year.

Thank you to our partners on this program, Central Florida Health Care and specifically:

Dr. Hein, Sheila Hernandez, Tina Knight,  
Susana Boyette, and Denise Collazol



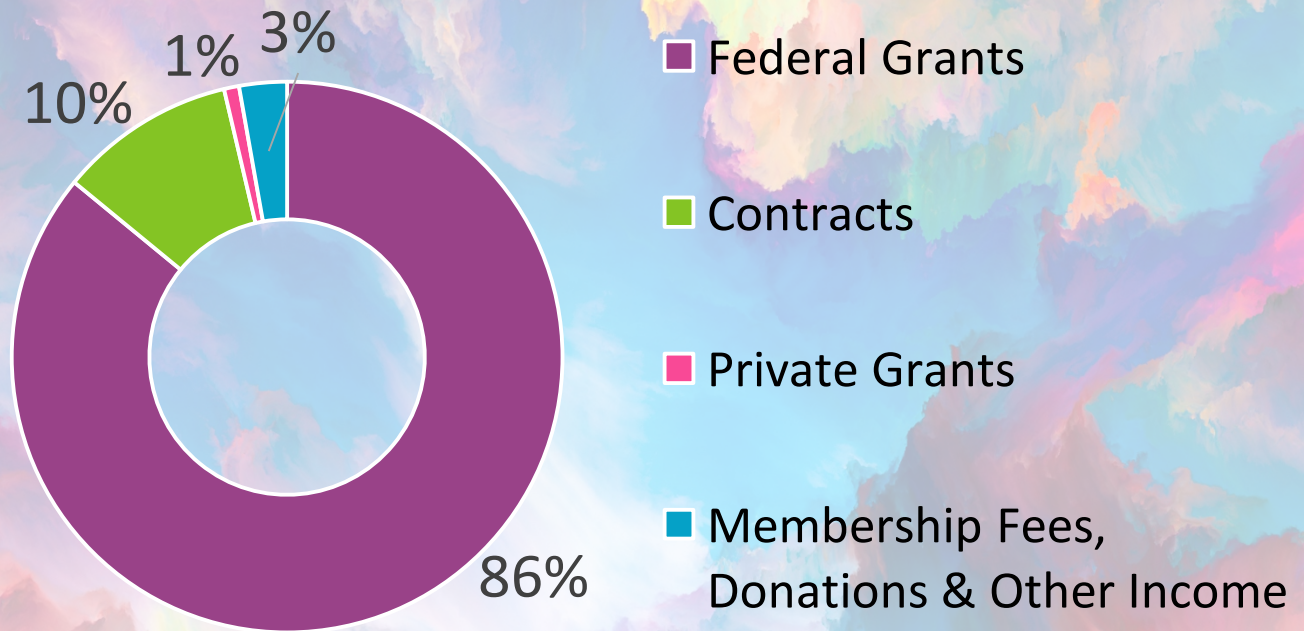
**Central Florida  
Health Care**

Health Care With a Heart

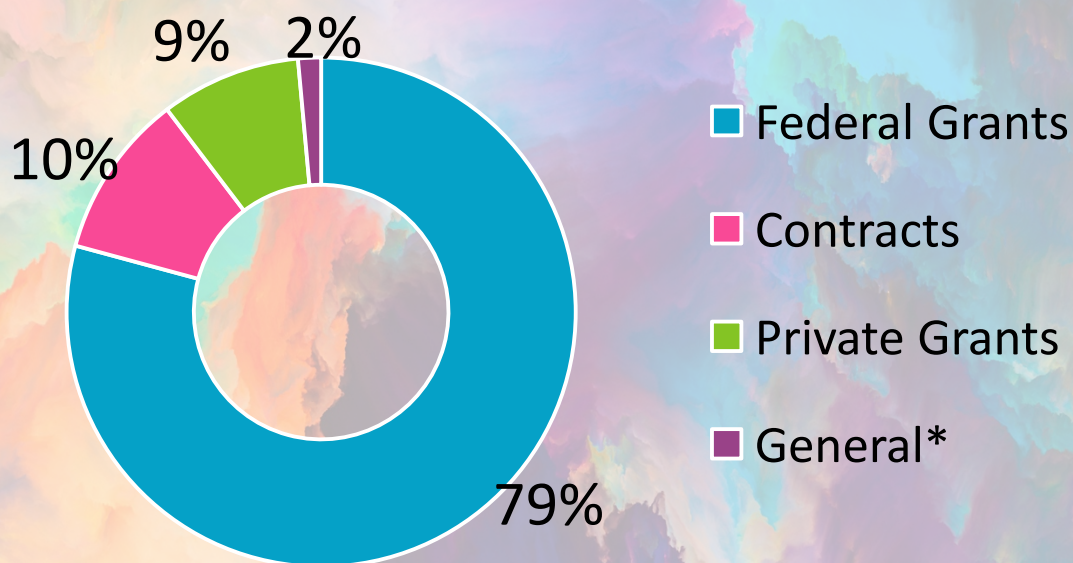
To learn more about CFHC visit [www.cfhconline.org](http://www.cfhconline.org)

# Financial Highlights

## Income by Funding Source



## Expenses by Funding Source





# JUST A THOUGHT...

Embracing change, working together and using outside the box thinking to face challenges helped Heartland Rural Health Network thrive in 2018-2019.

**Embracing change** – We have been met with changes within our organization and external changes that have challenged us to rethink approaches, restructure our organization and look for new opportunities.

**Working together** – I truly believe 2018-2019 was the best year HRHN has had as a team working together and working with our partners. We have an amazing staff without whose help and ingenuity this would not have been a stellar year. These employees include Larry Moore, Tamara Cruz, Michelle Cathey, and Anthony Fontanes. We have enriched partnerships with DeSoto Memorial, Central Florida Health Care, the Highlands County School Board, and many other of our Network Members and community organizations.

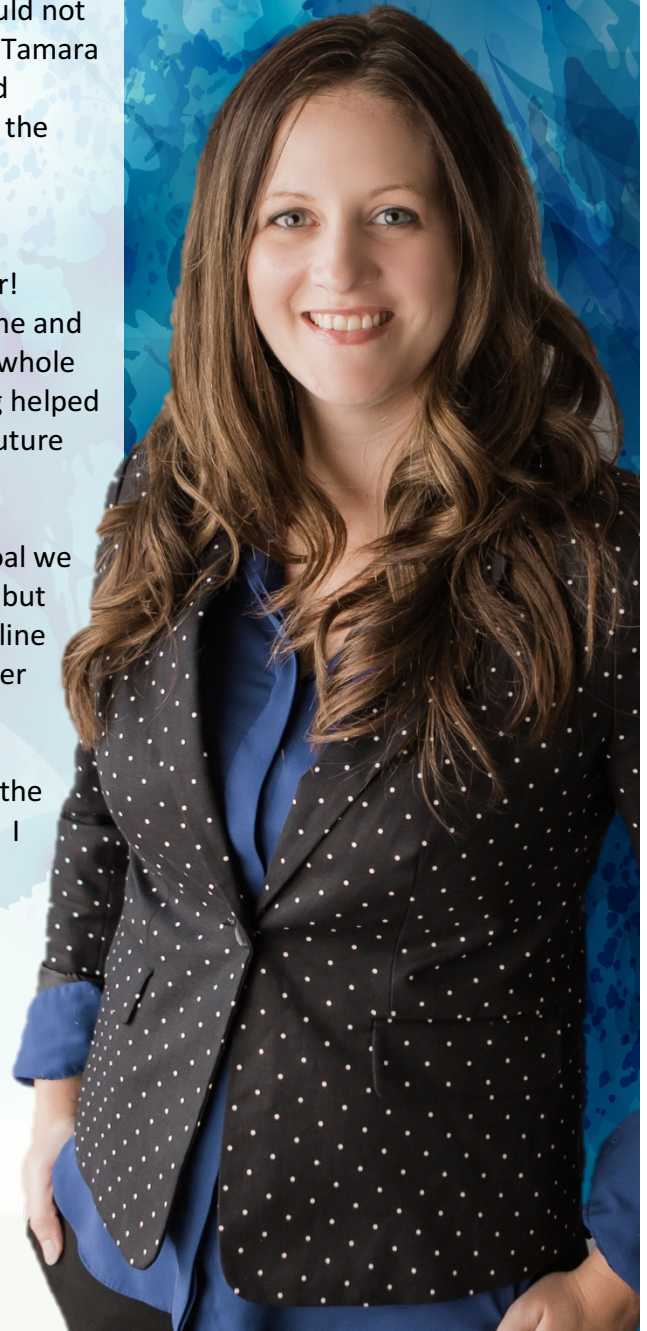
**Facing Challenges** – Wow, have we had some challenges this year! When we talk about all the obstacles we have faced and overcome and turned into opportunities this year, it makes me so proud of the whole team and proud to be a small part of it. Outside the box thinking helped a lot this year and will continue to help us forge a path into the future that is changing every minute of every day.

**Thriving** – HRHN thrived. We met almost every programmatic goal we set for ourselves this year. Some of these goals we not only met but demolished, such as completion of programming and overall decline of the Highlands County Pregnancy Rates, as well as so many other items highlighted in the prior pages.

But, as mentioned before, all this would not be possible without the staff and our partners. So, thank you to all staff and all partners. I look forward to growing together and thriving at Heartland Rural Health Network in the future.



Melissa Thibodeau, Executive Director





# **2018 – 2019 Network Members**

**Air Methods Corporation**

**Central Florida Area Health Education Center**

**Central Florida Health Care, Inc.**

**Charlotte County Health Department**

**DeSoto Memorial Hospital**

**Drug Free Highlands**

**Florida Hospital Heartland Division**

**Florida Hospital Lake Placid**

**Florida Hospital Wauchula**

**Hardee County Health Department**

**Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties**

**Highlands County Health Department**

**Pioneer Medical Center**

**Polk County Health Department**

**Samaritan's Touch Care Center**

**Tampa General Hospital**

**Tri-County Human Services**

