

# Commission to Study County's Health Care

Last month, the Hillsborough County Commission agreed to study recommendations from the committee established to reevaluate the structure of the county's health care plan for low-income, uninsured residents.

The Health Care Study Committee – made up of medical professionals, county officials, academicians and concerned citizens, and staffed by Hillsborough County Health and Social Services – presented its recommendations to improve health care for low-income, uninsured residents during

the Commission's Oct. 5th board meeting.

The group conducted an in-depth examination of

key issues like updating the program's mission statement and forming four sub committees – Core Services, Management and Administration; Compensation and Incentives, and Innovations and Best Practices – to make specific recommendations to the Study Committee. These committees held a total of 45 public meetings to discuss proposed changes and to incorporate citizen feedback.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue use of a ½ cent sales tax as the program's primary source of funding

Continue serving uninsured persons living at or below the federal poverty level

More emphasis on health education, prevention, early intervention and disease management

Retain current structure for at least 2-3 years, while proposed changes are implemented

Restructure the program, basing it on contracts for bundled components of services that best take advantage of the market strengths of providers

Motivate providers to give incentives that encourage patients to take responsibility for their own health

## Backflow *(From front page)*

landscaping and is not meant for consumption, while potable water can pool and stagnate inside the lines of sprinkler systems.

Since 1993, Hillsborough County has had an ordinance which regulates and enforces cross-connection control and backflow prevention. The Development Services Division, under the Planning & Growth Management Department, carries out the provisions of the ordinance.

Among other things, the ordinance requires the installation of backflow prevention devices or assemblies on new and upgraded commercial and residential irrigation systems. For residential customers, one-piece, "dual check" devices are automatically installed at the meter on reclaimed water sprinkler systems. These devices are maintained and checked by the Water Department.

But, state building codes and the county's ordinance also require that backflow prevention assemblies must be placed on sprinkler systems

that rely on regular, potable water. In most cases, the assemblies must be installed by a private contractor who is required to obtain a building permit. The assemblies also must be checked annually by a certified tester who is registered with Development Services. Even the tester's equipment is registered to be sure it's calibrated properly.

If you've received a notice that it's time to have your system's backflow prevention assembly tested, you're encouraged to shop around for a tester. They typically cost between \$25 to \$75.

The cross-connection control and backflow ordinance is enforced by an eight-member board appointed by County Commissioners. The board issues citations and fines, and hears appeals.

For more information about backflow prevention, including a list of companies which offer tests of assemblies, call 635-7370.

## Bringing Together People and Opportunities



Hillsborough County's Employment Opportunity Program is a primary resource for business owners who need to locate or place candidates in job openings. In fact, participation in the program is even more convenient than ever because employers can now go online and easily post vacant positions.

The Employment Opportunity Program, which was implemented in April 2004 by the Health & Social Services Department, is aimed at helping Hillsborough County residents regain economic self-sufficiency through employment. The service is offered at no expense to business owners or the applicants seeking employment.

Services provided by county staff include a pre-screening of all applicants to ensure that they are qualified to fill vacant positions. There's an in-depth interview to assess employment needs, an evaluation of the applicant's work history, removal of potential employment barriers and providing follow-up with employers and clients to ensure job retention.

For details, or to post a job opening to the site, employers can simply visit the Employment Opportunity Program site at [www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/home](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/home). From there, simply click on "Social Services" where a link to the Employment Opportunity Program can be found.

## Annual Festival Promises to Light Up the Night

You won't want to miss Hillsborough County's 4th Annual Festival of Lights, coming to downtown Tampa's Joe Chillura Courthouse Square on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2005 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.



For many a youngster, meeting Santa and Mrs. Claus will be a highlight of this year's festival.

Once again, the festival will feature a visit from Santa & Mrs. Claus, a troupe of dancers, elves and fairies from The Center Stage Dance Academy, The Gaither High School Marching Cowboys, and Santa's official holiday escorts, the Hillsborough County Fire/Rescue firefighters.

In addition, games, arts & crafts, a climbing wall and two snow slopes will be available for kids of all ages to enjoy. Festival visitors will also be able to enjoy free cold drinks, hot dogs, cotton candy and popcorn. So, mark the date and begin your holiday with a Hillsborough County tradition. For more information, call 272-5275 or e-mail: [Santa@hillsboroughcounty.org](mailto:Santa@hillsboroughcounty.org).

## NEWS BRIEFS...

### Public Art Displays Find New Homes

Two Hillsborough County facilities received upgrades recently, thanks to a 1989 public art ordinance allowing County Commissioners to fund works of art for county buildings. Officials dedicated a sculpture called *The Firefighter* to the Sun City Center fire station in celebration of public safety.

In addition, the Hillsborough County Commission, Public Art Committee, and Friends of the Upper Tampa Bay Regional Library dedicated four bronzed sculptures to the library last month.

Previously on display at Westfield Citrus Park, the playful artwork was donated to Hillsborough County by the mall.



Artist Harrison Covington created *The Firefighter* (above). The bronze statue of a girl jumping rope is displayed at the Upper Tampa Bay Regional Library.

### Hillsborough County Communicator

Published every month by the Communications Department to inform residents about the programs, services and activities of their County government.

For more information, call the Hillsborough Information Line at 272-5900, or visit the county's website at: [www.hillsboroughcounty.org](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org)

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**COMMUNICATOR**  
Keeping You Informed About County Government  
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## Keep Backflow at Bay

Sprinkler systems are wonderful inventions. They take the worry and the work out of watering, save time, and can give you a lush, green lawn that's the envy of the neighborhood.

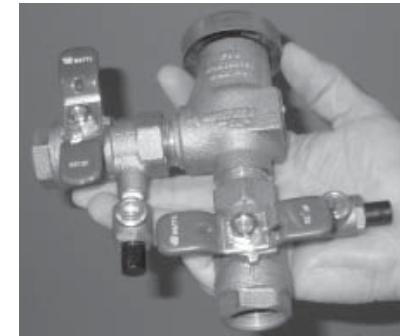
They can also be a danger to the public water supply.

When there's a significant decrease in

water pressure in an area – as can happen when there's a line break, heavy use, or a fire hydrant opened – the water from an irrigation system can be pulled back into the home's indoor plumbing and the public water supply lines. That opens the door to potential contamination.

Reclaimed water irrigation systems distribute water that is treated for reuse only on lawns and

(See "Backflow, inside")



This small assembly can save the public water supply from being contaminated.

### In This Issue ...

- Keep Backflow at Bay
- Annual Festival Lights Up the Night
- Commission Considers Health Care Plan