

UP FRONT

WITH ELAINE C. THOMPSON, PHD, FACHE
PRESIDENT AND CEO



As Thanksgiving approaches and as we gather together with family and friends, many of us have opportunities to share what in our lives makes us most thankful. It is a great time of year when we can hopefully slow down, think about what really matters and share those observations with others.

As I thought about what I am most thankful for, I looked back over my years in the healthcare industry and realized that what makes me truly thankful is the one constant that steadfastly remains even in the most difficult of times - the goodness of people and their willingness to help others in time of need.

I need only look to our great team at Lakeland Regional Health to know that there is something inherently special about those who have chosen to work in a realm where the ultimate goal is to save a life, to improve the quality of life, or to teach and train others in what it means to lead a healthy life.

One of the special ways our team comes together to reach these goals and strengthen the health of our community is outlined in our recently published [Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

Every three years we work with our community and analyze health data to assess the needs of those we serve and formulate initiatives and anticipated outcomes to make a difference in key areas. Though the needs are many, when people come together and embrace a community as their own, great things can happen and ambitious goals can be realized.

Our new CHNA targets the following areas of need. We look forward to sharing news about this ongoing and exciting work with you in the future.

1. Reducing obesity
2. Enhancing maternal and infant care
3. Increasing access to quality, coordinated care
4. Expanding mental healthcare initiatives
5. Increasing cancer screening and prevention
6. Targeting heart disease and stroke screening and prevention
7. Promoting injury prevention.

Thankfulness can be shown in many ways. Whether it's through your workplace or as an individual, I encourage you to find opportunities to care for our community. My roles as the Chair of Polk Vision and a member of the Boards of the Early Learning Coalition and the YMCA of West Central Florida connect me with a fabulous group of caring individuals whose desire is to improve the lives of those in Polk County and beyond. Joining together with others to do

good things has a way of lifting your own spirit while providing hope and reassurance to others.

On behalf of the Lakeland Regional Health team, we are honored to fulfill our role as an essential community resource. We know that no matter what, you depend on us to be there for you at life's most trying and most joyous moments.

May the goodness you bring to others be returned many times over, and may goodness remain that reliable constant in our lives, our community and our world.