

# THE SANFORD HERALD

## County endorses regional pediatric hospital

By Steve Paradis  
Herald Staff

SANFORD — In endorsing plans to bring the Nemours Children's Hospital to Central Florida, the Seminole Board of County Commissioners became the first elected government to do so.

"This facility is really needed now and will be more needed in the future," said Commissioner Randy Morris.

Karen Breakell, director of Community Relations for Nemours, presented plans to build a top-tiered children hospital in Central Florida.

Commissioners pointed out that Nemours has not asked for any incentive money to build on its 20-plus acres near

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## Nemours

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Millennium Mall in Orlando.

The company is searching for alternative sites.

"We are not wedded to that site," Breakell said after her presentation. She added that Seminole County would probably not be included on the list of alternatives. The company already has a satellite clinic in Lake Mary.

"There is so much growth here and there's definitely a need," she said.

Some disagree. Those in the established health care industry in Central Florida have objected to the new hospital. They have questioned the need for a children's hospital.

Breakell pointed out that the hospital would create economic impact exceeding \$350 million with 1,500 new jobs. Plans call for a Florida-based clinical research center for pediatrics, she said.

Commissioner Bob Dallari asked Breakell about possibly duplication of services. She said the hospital's mission would be to work in collaboration with established hospitals.

The services that Nemours provides are for 18 percent of children with illnesses, she pointed out. Nemours deals with complex illnesses such as cystic fibrosis or cerebral palsy as well as chronic ailments such as asthma and diabetes.

The hospital would integrate technology and have it at one location.

"We will have an emergency room for children," she said. "That is something unique to this community."

Morris said governments should move to support this

because construction costs increase all the time. He asked about how Nemours handles indigent patients.

Breakell said the Alfred I. DuPont Testamentary Trust has \$4 billion. Physicians do not have to concern themselves about the financial status of patients and can concentrate on treating them.

Doctors are employees of the hospital, she said, and they don't have to worry about collecting payments and rising malpractice insurance premiums.

The trust also allows the hospital not to seek incentives to build in Central Florida. They envision a pediatrics corridor from Jacksonville to Orlando and into the Panhandle of the state, where Nemours already has facilities.

A subsidiary of Nemours is

kidshealth.org, which Breakell said is the most visited site of its kind.

She also said the hospital was denied in its first application for a certificate of need, which it must obtain from the state. She said that is normal and Nemours is getting ready to appeal that decision and make a new application later in October.

The resolution passed unanimously by the county Board points out that Nemours established an Orlando clinic and has provided more than \$140 million in mission support to Central Florida.

"Orlando is blessed with excellent hospitals and that added services and competition will only enhance the healthcare system for the citizens of Central Florida," the resolution states.