



September 21, 2016

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Blue Ridge Health (BRH), I am writing in support of the extension of the Oklawaha Greenway in Henderson County from Jackson Park to Blue Ridge Community College. The mission of BRH is to provide quality healthcare that is accessible and affordable for all. Encouraging individuals to utilize outdoor spaces for exercise is an integral part of this mission.

BRH has served as a medical home for the uninsured and underserved of Western North Carolina since 1963. A 501(c)(3) governed by a community Board of Directors, the organization is a critical component of the local health care delivery system, providing comprehensive primary health care for 27,226 patients in 2015. BRH offers family medicine, pediatrics, pregnancy care, school health, dental, behavioral health and community outreach services. Overall, 58 percent of patients served, including children, were uninsured. BRH accepts patients without insurance on a sliding fee scale that is based on family size and household income. No patients are turned away for inability to pay.

The Oklawaha Greenway is important to BRH and the community. It provides space where individuals of all ages can explore nature and utilize trails to stay healthy through walking, running, biking and more. Additionally, Greenways simulate economic development and growth, which promotes employment and financial security for residents.

BRH is in full support of grant requests and efforts to achieve the plan to extend the Oklawaha Greenway from Jackson Park to Blue Ridge Community College. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 828.692.4289 or rhudspeth@brchs.com if you would like further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Hudspeth" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Hudspeth, MD
Chief Executive Officer/Chief Medical Officer