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Dear Governor DeSantis

I write to support the appointment of Dr. Scott Rivkees to the office of Surgeon General for the state of Florida. I worked with Dr. Rivkees in my role as Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer of UFHealth from the time Dr. Rivkees was recruited to be Chair of Pediatrics until my retirement in September of 2018.

Dr. Rivkees came into a department that had several personnel and operational issues. The department was in need of someone who could act as a change agent to promote the goals of the institution and he was given the mandate to improve the academic, educational and operational performance of the unit. Inevitably there were individuals who opposed the needed changes and these individuals actively subverted implementation of the needed changes. It became apparent that some of these individuals were not going to adapt to the new culture and the institution would be better served if they left. As you are aware, in an academic setting, getting people to leave is not always easy. Frankly, Dr. Rivkees, having never worked in a state system and particularly never having worked in the complexity of UF human resources, probably could have handled some of the individuals in a different manner that might have made their transition less controversial. Having said that, a couple of these individuals made it their personal mission to make Dr. Rivkees' life as difficult as possible. Their repeated personal attacks and baseless claims used up time and resources from the institution that could have been used to advance the mission of UF and so far have not found merit. I had many conversations with Dr. Rivkees over the years and I believe he has learned from these experiences and is now a much better manager than when he came to UF.

I do believe he would make an outstanding Surgeon General. Dr. Rivkees by all measure has been successful in achieving the mandate he was given by the Dean when he was hired. He put the department on a sound financial footing by redesigning the inpatient and outpatient clinical services so that they run more efficiently. He recruited outstanding clinicians to fill clinical needs so that we could continue to be the referral center of choice for sick children. He greatly expanded the research enterprise and the amount of federal funds earned by researchers. He supported the undergraduate and graduate medical education program and increased the number of highly qualified applicants applying to our residency program. He instituted a pediatric resident research meeting that is attended by residents from across the US. As part of a larger relationship strategy by UFHealth, Dr. Rivkees was tasked with oversight of the pediatric training programs at Orlando Health and at Sacred Heart in Pensacola. These programs have immensely benefitted from his leadership and are now on a firm footing and attracting excellent residents who will likely remain in Florida. By all measures, Dr. Rivkees has been a successful chairman of a major academic department.

In addition to his work at UF, he has also been involved in state-wide efforts to improve care for children. He has worked successfully with Children's Medical Services and the network that cares for the most vulnerable of pediatric patients. He has a firm grasp of financing and has been able to put together

networks of providers to deliver complex care. He has a real interest in health care policy and a grasp of operational initiatives in place to implement policy.

Dr. Rivkees really cares about the welfare of his patients. In his role as Surgeon General he will care about the welfare of the people of Florida. He has the intellectual and technical skills needed for this complicated position and I believe the caring and compassion which is essential for the top physician in the state. I believe, like all of us, there are some things in his career that he wished he had handled differently, but his abilities far outweigh his failings. In my close association with him over several years, I believe he has learned to be a better manager, better leader and better listener. Given the chance, I am sure he will be able to work with your office, the legislature and the people of Florida to accomplish our shared interest in improving the health of the citizens of this state.

Respectfully,

T.C. Flynn

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