

ALACHUA



COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

April 3, 2019

Sheriff Sadie Darnell
Post Office Box 5489 • Gainesville, FL 32627

Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
Attn: Helen Ferre
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

RE: Letter of Support – Dr. Scott Rivkees, Surgeon General

Dear Governor DeSantis:

This letter is to provide an overview of my tremendous respect and admiration for the contributions of Dr. Scott Rivkees to the Alachua County community. His selection as Florida's next surgeon general was a great choice. While in Alachua County, he has demonstrated unwavering concern for children. His vast medical knowledge and expertise will go far to address the needs of the State of Florida including the current opioid crisis.

Dr. Rivkees arrived at Shands at the University of Florida in 2012. He has been an ally for me, as Sheriff, in many valuable ways.

We first met in Marion County at a fund raising event for Shands/UF Children's Hospital. We had a conversation regarding how impressed he was with the collaborative nature of the Gainesville area and Alachua County. I was a board member of what was known then as the Children's Alliance Coalition (CAC). The CAC was a multi-disciplinary group of individuals and agency representatives who had any interest in networking for the benefit of children. Dr. Rivkees immediately began sending 1st year pediatric students to our meetings. The medical students were able to witness first-hand the grassroots work of various community organizations and the dramatic scope of needs of children of all ages.

In mid-2018, Dr. Rivkees was concerned about the rising numbers of childhood suicides across the State of Florida and, specifically, in Alachua County. He organized a think-tank meeting of community experts, including the medical, law enforcement and school representative to raise awareness and work toward identifying at-risk children locally and with state level entities.

To me, his most amazing achievement were his tenacious efforts to ensure the co-location of services for children who have been sexually or physically abused and/or otherwise suffering from maltreatment or neglect. He was able to do what no one else had been able to accomplish in our area for over two decades. There were many obstacles along the way and others who tried and either moved on or gave up. Due to Dr. Rivkees' perseverance and mediation skills, he brought this from a concept, which began in 1998, to a much needed successful resolution in 2018.

Dr. Rivkees will be a valuable asset to the State of Florida in his new role of Surgeon General. Thank you for his selection. This time next year, we will all be thanking him for his service.

Sincerely,

Sadie Darnell
Sadie Darnell
Sheriff
4/3/19

(352) 367-4000