



# MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR TIM BURCHETT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Service updates at Health Department will save taxpayers millions**

*Knoxville, Tenn.* — Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, along with the Knox County Health Department, will save taxpayers approximately \$2.5 million or more over the next four years, thanks to a contract approved by Knox County Commission for pediatric services and an updated approach to translation services.

The contract with Cherokee Health Systems to provide pediatric care is projected to save between \$1.8 million and \$2 million over the next four years of Mayor Burchett's term. Changing translation services could potentially save an additional \$720,000 over the same four year period.

"Using business-like models is a great way to ensure efficient service and substantial savings for our taxpayers," Mayor Burchett said. "Doing the right thing with citizens' money is one way I'm working to restore trust in Knox County Government."

Under the Cherokee Health Systems contract, the group will provide pediatric clinic services that the Health Department was previously providing. Cherokee will be able to bill TennCare and qualify for a higher reimbursement rate than the Health Department through the federal dollars they can access which are not available to KCHD, which makes this contract a good financial option for Cherokee. The agreement will save Knox County taxpayers between \$450,000 and \$500,000 each year, according to Health Department estimates.

Using Language Learning Enterprises, an organization that provides translation services by phone, is expected to save Knox County an average of \$15,000 per month on services that were previously provided by a live translator at a cost of more than \$17,000 each month. An in-person translator will still be used in some situations.

"These changes are a win-win for the community, the organizations we're partnering with, and, most importantly, for Knox County taxpayers," Knox County Health Department Director Dr. Martha Buchanan said. "I am very thankful for Mayor Burchett's work on this effort and for commission's support."

"This is the type of thing that needs to happen more often, in order to keep Knox County moving in the right direction, as long as we stay focused on service, efficiency and savings," Mayor Burchett said. "Dr. Buchanan and her staff did a great job securing these services."

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