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## Sheriff's clinic is a good idea: Editorial

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Ernie Clevenger insists that transparency and accountability are critical to how CareHere operates.

That's encouraging from a company president who will be doing business with one of Lee County's largest public agencies.

Nashville, Tenn.-based CareHere is the company that the Lee County Sheriff's Office is hiring to manage an in-house health clinic for its employees and dependents, set to open in August in Fort Myers. The clinic is expected to save \$7.2 million over three years.

In a telephone conversation Wednesday, Clevenger candidly spoke about the savings. He said the clinic can do lab work cheaper and buy at a bulk pharmacy rate. In addition, doctors will spend more time with patients and give advice on how to manage personal health care, thus, avoiding future high costs.

The idea is worth pursuing. We commend Sheriff Mike Scott for considering an innovative approach to saving taxpayer and employee money.

We would have liked to see greater transparency, however, in his process of explaining this idea. We were disappointed that it took an open-records request to learn more.

It's important to know the company's track record and how the sheriff assessed it, what the basis was for its selection and whether the contract was up for competitive bidding.

County commissioners, who approve the sheriff's budget, should have asked questions during Scott's presentation this week.

This could be a model for other employers, but only in an open, public process.

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