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Media Contact: Teresa Barber, *Director* – Fairfield Index, Inc.

Phone: 813.777.6151 | **Email:** tbarber@fairfieldindex.com

Florida Center for Nursing Prioritizes STEM, Works with Leaders and Partners Across Target Industries to Announce Launch of STEM*Florida*, Inc.

On June 24th in Orlando, the Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) joins leaders across Florida's target industry clusters and state and regional partners to launch STEM*Florida*, Inc. as the vehicle to ensure the leadership for Florida's STEM movement and to honor the state's best practices in STEM programs and efforts. Many of the leaders convening for this Think Tank participated in a cross-industry team focused on prioritizing improvements for Florida's network of STEM resources, data, and support programs and collaborative efforts.

As a member of the STEM*Florida* Business Steering Council, FCN executive director Mary Lou Brunell has worked with partners and colleagues from healthcare and Florida's target industry clusters to ensure that the needs of Florida's STEM-enabled industries are articulated into the priorities of Florida's STEM movement and elevated as actions in policy recommendations and situation assessments to Florida's education and talent development leaders. The STEM*Florida* Business Steering Council; comprised of leaders from industry, philanthropy, education, and government; has made the bold assertion that Florida cannot address the needs of STEM employers without connecting how Florida addresses talent and economic development needs to the needs of current and target STEM employers.

"Healthcare professions, and nursing in particular, are STEM careers with real pathways for growth and learning," remarked Brunell, who also serves as Chair of Workforce Florida, Inc. "In many cases in Florida, we have work to do to connect these high-wage jobs to the values of STEM –to raise awareness for workers, students, and even industry leaders."

The STEM*Florida* Think Tank, scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET at the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport, is a separate event co-located with the Florida Economic Development Council's (FEDC) 2011 Annual Conference, *Introducing the New Florida*. This co-location underscores FEDC's announcement of STEM*Florida* as a best practice, and serves as acknowledgement by FEDC's team of economic development practitioners of STEM as key to value-driven economic development and job retention and growth.

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More information on the Think Tank can be found at www.STEMflorida.net.

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About the Florida Center for Nursing.

The Florida Center for Nursing has been the central coordination point for nursing workforce efforts, both in terms of collaboration with stakeholders as well as conducting research into the shortage since its inception in 2002. As the definitive source for information, research, and strategies addressing the dynamic nursing workforce needs in Florida, the FCN staff and board members direct their resources to address nurse workforce issues for the health of Florida. The Center is housed at the University of Central Florida. For more information on the FCN and to view its work and reports please visit www.FLCenterForNursing.org.

About STEMflorida.

STEM is an acronym that stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. In states and regions around the globe, leaders have reached across jurisdictions and industries to forge alliances, making STEM a table-stake for jobs, capital, and innovation. Urgent calls to action around STEM for the sake of global competitiveness are not new. *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, a 2005 report requested from the National Academies by Congress described the workforce needs of the 21st century and the nation's current gaps and opportunities in providing the STEM workforce. The need for improving STEM talent development has been highlighted by reports of the Business-Higher Education Forum in 2005 and 2007. STEM received special Congressional attention in the 2011 Congressional budget and the reauthorization plan.

STEMflorida launched in June of 2009, through a \$580,000 grant from Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI), jointly announced by WFI and Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) for the creation of a statewide STEM council. The joint announcement followed foundational collaborative work with partners across the state, including the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Council of 100, Florida Chamber Foundation, and the Florida Department of Education. At the core of the STEMflorida initiative and movement, a simple intent has guided the effort: ensure leadership for Florida's STEM movement by connecting relevant education and talent development programs, philanthropic stewardship, economic and community development collaboratives and strategy around the demand-side need of Florida's current, emerging, and target STEM employers.