An employee exchange agreement between the Florida State University College of Medicine and the Leon County Department of Health came under fire early this month when Leon County Commissioner Bill Proctor called the agreement an FSU takeover of the department.

Proctor's accusations centered largely on the hiring of Claudia Blackburn as the county's health department administrator. Blackburn, who previously served as the health director of the Sedgwick County Health Department in Wichita, Kan., was hired for the administrator position in April following a nationwide search by both FSU and the Leon County DOH.

In the position, Blackburn will serve as an FSU employee but will be assigned to run the county's health department. The employee exchange agreement with the university is meant to help attract highly qualified candidates from around the country, according to FSU and DOH officials.

Proctor approved Blackburn’s hire, but questioned the lack of public vetting of the new administrator. He said the agreement between Florida State and DOH is a move for the university to takeover the department. He has also expressed that he believes a local would be better to take on the position of health department administrator.

"This arrangement that FSU has with DOH portends of a secret government plan akin to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment against poor victims," Proctor wrote in a letter to FSU Interim President Garnett Stokes and Florida Surgeon General Dr. John Armstrong. "The lack of sunlight on this negotiated pact between FSU and DOH and Claudia Blackburn appears to be a concoction of arrogance, disrespect and selfishness that will lead to a health care Armageddon for recipients of public health care from the Leon County Health Department."

Proctor said he will call for patients to boycott the health department for medical services if Blackburn takes the position.

FSU's partnership with DOH is not unique to the university. The agreement is similar to an agreement between the University of South Florida and DOH to hire the administrator in Polk and Hillsborough counties.

Florida State's College of Medicine has denied that the agreement is an effort to takeover the health department.

“It’s not a Florida State University takeover of the health department,” FSU College of Medicine’s Dr. Les Beitsch, who worked on the DOH agreement, told The Tallahassee Democrat. "This is meant to strengthen everyone’s capacity and capability."