



SOUTH OF SLIGO CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION

907 Larch Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
February 9, 2015

Maryland Health Care Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

Dear Maryland Health Care Commissioners:

The South of Sligo Citizens' Association (SOSCA) voted in October, 2013 regarding the proposed move of Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) to White Oak to make every effort to maintain full emergency room services on the Takoma Park campus. This is necessary to ensure that the vital interests of the community are met during and after the CON process.

The Washington Adventist Hospital has been an asset to the Takoma Park community for decades. It has boosted property values and added a sense of security to residents that their health needs, especially competent emergency care, could be met in a nearby and convenient location. We would love to maintain the full hospital in Takoma Park if that were possible.

Maintaining the full emergency room services in Takoma Park has been a priority of the community since WAH first discussed renovating its facility years ago and then moving. Emergency medical services is the greatest local need identified in the 2012 WAH relocation citizen survey conducted by the City of Takoma Park. For most of the community, the emergency room is a life or death issue, especially in cases of heart attack, stroke, serious injuries, and even asthma and serious allergies. Distance and traffic in getting to another emergency room would take too long in cases of these types of emergencies. The local emergency room allows patients to maintain ties with family and friends in the community, and more readily get help when needed. For those who live alone, it may mean the difference between getting timely medical care in emergency situations or delaying and taking risky chances with their health. Women needing an emergency abortion or emergency contraceptive care are likely to be denied that care at Holy Cross. Having the WAH emergency room nearby is a valuable community asset that has a significant positive effect on the quality of life of Takoma Park residents as well as our property values.

The proposed primary care facility, initially to be run 24 hours a day, does not provide the same services as the emergency room. It does not provide the same level of emergency and trauma care, does not have the same diagnostic capabilities, nor does it

save lives when minutes count. It is not regulated the same as an emergency room, so even the basic services being proposed now could be cut with no recourse for the community.

Travel to the proposed White Oak location would be a burden to many community members, altering the decision to seek care in the wrong direction with many opting to not make the trip or delay the trip resulting in negative health outcomes. Many Takoma Park residents live alone and finding transportation to White Oak is difficult. One cannot call a neighbor to take them to the emergency room in White Oak in the middle of the night. Calling an ambulance would leave you with no transportation home requiring, if available, an expensive taxi ride.

Getting to White Oak from Takoma Park during rush hour is extremely difficult, routinely taking 45 minutes to an hour. Pity the person who has a stroke or heart attack during rush hour. In short, moving the hospital will be a huge burden on the health and decrease in services to the Takoma Park community.

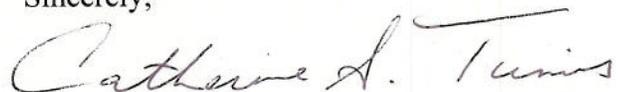
The WAH CON does not even request keeping the emergency room on the Takoma Park campus. We understand this is because WAH was instructed by Maryland Health Care Commission employees to NOT include a request to maintain the emergency room in Takoma Park in its CON. We believe this was an error. The 2010 law does not prohibit WAH from including a request to maintain the emergency room facilities. It only states that the Maryland Health Care Commission cannot approve a new freestanding emergency facility CON before July 1, 2015. This is just a few months away—the blink of an eye in the timeline of the CON process.

WAH is interested in maintaining an emergency room in Takoma Park. We insist that the existing emergency room on the Takoma Park location be maintained—with all its attendant diagnostic capabilities and expertise.

SOSCA urges the Maryland Health Care Commission to reflect citizen views and advocate for maintaining health care services in Takoma Park in the CON process to help protect the Takoma Park community's health needs and other interests, and mitigate the many health care and economic losses to the community if WAH were to relocate.

I hope that Maryland Health Care Commission will incorporate SOSCA's views to maintain strong health services in Takoma Park. We have SOSCA members who are very knowledgeable on these issues and stand ready to discuss these issues with the Commission to develop the best outcomes for our City and residents. We look forward to a productive process.

Sincerely,



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