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Jinlene Chan, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer

November 4, 2016

Mr. Paul E. Parker, Director
Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development
Maryland Health Care Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

RE: Anne Arundel Medical Center Mental Health Hospital – Docket No. 16-02-2375

Dear Mr. Parker:

Pursuant to COMAR 10.24.01.01 B (2)(d), the Anne Arundel County Department of Health (AACDOH) requests interested party status in support of the above referenced Application to establish the Anne Arundel Medical Center Mental Health Hospital. AACDOH is the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the project would be located and the proposed services would be delivered.

Anne Arundel County is the State's fifth most populous county, with a population of 550,000, yet we have only 14 inpatient psychiatric beds (located at University of Maryland –Baltimore Washington Medical Center) in the County that serve only adults. According to the 2015 Anne Arundel County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), community stakeholders highlighted the fast-growing demand for mental health services in the County and the inadequate existing resources to address this demand (including inadequate access to inpatient psychiatric care), and made improved mental health services overall as one of the highest healthcare priorities for the County.

The demand for mental health services has increased for every age group. Residential mental health beds are almost nonexistent in the county. According to the CHNA there was an 11% increase from FY 2013 to FY 2014 in residents served by the County Mental Health Agency; a 14.5% increase in mental health services for children, ages 6 – 12; and a 9.6% increase for children between 13 and 17 years of age.

With population growth and a growing demand for mental health services, the inpatient unit at UM BWMC's unit is almost always fully subscribed. In addition, there are no adolescent inpatient psychiatric beds in the County at all. The increasing number of patients, both adult and adolescent, who present at AAMC's emergency department in need of inpatient mental health care face unacceptably long wait times until an available bed is found somewhere else in the State. While inpatient programs exist

outside Anne Arundel County across the State, these programs are at a significant geographic distance from Anne Arundel County and are less likely to be well-integrated with local, community-based resources critical to successful recovery and long-term community-based management. The volume of Anne Arundel County patients who require psychiatric admission requires more than one locally-based inpatient unit. AAMC's proposed mental health hospital and partial hospitalization program for children and adults will help meet this critical need in the County and is an important component of the continuum of mental health care that we need in Anne Arundel County.

AAMC's application also demonstrates that it continues to be forward thinking in determining how to best meet the needs of County residents. The AACDOH supports their proposal to include shell space in the building for the new and expanded mental health services described in the Application which include: 1) a pain management program to respond to the problems of patients with chronic pain who would be best served by an integrated approach to pain management; 2) inclusion of an expanded outpatient clinic that would establish a new intensive outpatient program for children and adolescents; and 3) a potential adolescent inpatient unit (if the IMD exclusion issue is resolved) to address the critical need for adolescent inpatient psychiatric beds in the County.

Overall, we believe that the proposal for a new mental health hospital that incorporates a comprehensive network of community-based outpatient treatment services would promote continuity of care and certainly improve the access to needed care within our community. For these reasons, we support the Application and request that it be approved by the Commission. I appreciate your consideration of these comments and the needs of the residents of Anne Arundel County. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at 410-222-7375.

Sincerely,



Jinlene Chan, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer

cc: Victoria Bayless, Anne Arundel Medical Center
Adrienne Mickler, Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, Inc.
Sandra O'Neill, Anne Arundel County Department of Health