



COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

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July 14, 2017

Deborah Mizeur, MS, MHA, LDN, Co-Chair
Rural Health Care Delivery Workgroup

Joseph A. Ciotola, M.D., Co-Chair
Rural Health Care Delivery Workgroup

Re: Regional Health Care Facility – Easton, Maryland

Dear Ms. Mizeur and Dr. Ciotola:

On behalf of the Talbot County Council, I write to share our vision of the future of health care on the Mid-Shore and the essential role a new Shore Health System regional hospital will play in making this vision a reality. We appreciate the time and effort that you, as Co-Chairs of the Rural Health Care Delivery Workgroup (the “Workgroup”), are putting into the study of health care needs in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot counties, and we trust that you will take our perspective into account as you complete this important work.

Talbot County sees a future of high quality, affordable, and convenient care for both residents and visitors of the Mid-Shore. To that end, we have been working closely with University of Maryland Shore Regional Health (“Shore Health”) for over ten years to develop and implement a strategy for revitalizing our existing system through the construction of a state-of-the-art regional medical campus in Easton. The new facility will deploy modern technology, attract the best nurses, doctors, and medical staff, and act as a key driver for the Mid-Shore economy. Moreover, each party – Talbot County, the Town of Easton, and Shore Health – has contributed assets and made commitments to ensure that the venture is financially sound and sustainable over the long run. For instance, the County contributed 223 acres, more or less, of land with water and sewer service that Shore Health will be able to develop with ancillary medical office space for lease, thus generating significant additional revenue for the hospital. We are proud of the strength of our partnership with Shore Health and certain that by continuing to work together Mid-Shore residents will see higher quality, more affordable, and more convenient health care going forward.

Shore Health’s application for a Certificate of Need (“CON”) to authorize the new facility is currently pending, with a decision expected by the end of this year. The CON follows significant project milestones

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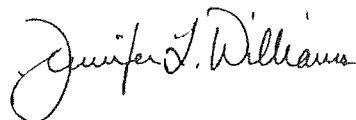
in recent years, notably the execution of a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement between Talbot County, the Town, and Shore Health, and the conveyance of the future hospital site to Shore Health, which collectively require the construction, at a minimum, of an acute care hospital with at least 100 beds.

As you are aware, the Workgroup is tasked with examining challenges to the delivery of health care in the five counties study area, including (i) the limited availability of health care providers and services; (ii) the special needs of vulnerable populations; (iii) transportation barriers; and, (iv) the economic impact of the closure, or partial closure, or conversion of health care facilities. We recognize these challenges and believe the new Shore Health regional medical facility in Easton is essential to addressing them. The new medical campus co-locates a range of health care services in one easily accessible location in Easton, the largest concentrated population center in the Mid-Shore area. This central location on U.S. Route 50, a major thoroughfare for vacationers, commercial interests, and inter-county traffic, will facilitate access for all residents, including the most vulnerable among us, and will cut down on the number of ambulance trips across the Bay Bridge. It also has the benefit of close proximity to Chesapeake College, which offers an array of educational opportunities in the health care field and a pipeline of future medical staff members who can supplement their classroom learning with internships at the new Shore Health facility. Whereas the economic impact of closing or diminishing the existing hospital in Easton without a replacement would be devastating, the new medical campus promises reinvestment and revitalization, not only in Easton but also throughout the Mid-Shore area. We also see the impact that medical facilities not subject to State CON approval, such as free-standing urgent care centers, have on the revenue needed by existing hospitals. We ask that the Workgroup give some attention to addressing how such unregulated medical centers impact rural hospitals more so than those in larger urban areas.

Easton has a long and rich history in the health care field. Since 1907 when the hospital originally known as Memorial Hospital at Easton was first founded, residents have rallied to support the cause of quality care for all members of the community. We fully expect that all of the services offered at the hospital, known today as University of Maryland Shore Regional Health, and more will be offered at the new facility. With continued leadership from Shore Health, the Town, and Talbot County, we expect an even stronger legacy for the region as the new Easton medical campus goes from planning to construction and into service.

We hope that you will take our perspective into account as you finalize your study and prepare a report for the Governor and members of the General Assembly. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also be pleased to have you or members of the Workgroup at one of our meetings, or to attend one your meetings to further this dialogue.

Sincerely,
COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY



Jennifer L. Williams
President

Deborah Mizeur, MS, MHA, LDN, Co-Chair

Joseph A. Ciotola, M.D., Co-Chair

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cc: Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton, Chairman Senate Finance Committee
Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
Senator Stephen Hershey
Senator James Mathias
Delegate Sheree L. Sample-Hughes
Delegate Jay Jacobs
Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary, DHMH
Joy Strand, CEO, McCready Health
Mark Boucot, CEO, Garrett Regional Medical Center
Ken Kozel, President & CEO, Shore Regional Health
Gene Ransom, CEO, MedChi
Richard Colgan, MD, UM School of Medicine
Garret Falcone, Executive Director, Heron Point Senior Living Community
Susan Johnson, VP of Quality and Population Health at Choptank Health
Margaret Malaro, MD
Scott Warner, Executive Director, Mid-Shore Regional Council
Brett McCone, VP, MHA
Lara Wilson, Executive Director, Maryland Rural Health Association
Roger Harrell, Health Officer, Dorchester County
Bob Grace, President of Dixon Valve
Leland Spencer, Health Officer, Kent and Caroline Counties
Frieda Wadley, Health Officer, Talbot County
Heather Guerieri, Compass Hospice
Jennifer Berkman, Eastern Shore AHEC
Wayne Howard, Former CEO, Choptank Health
Holly Ireland, Executive Director, Mid Shore Mental Health Association
Kevin H. Beverly, President and CEO, Social & Scientific Systems
Doris Mason, Executive Director, Upper Shore Regional Council
Anna Sierra, Executive Director, Dorchester County Department of Emergency Services
Ben Steffen, MHCC, Ex Officio Member
Mark Luckner, CHRC, Ex Officio Member
Lisa Myers, MIEMSS, Ex Officio Member
Donna Kinzer, HSCRC, Ex Officio Member
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Delegate Johnny Mautz, District 37B
Delegate Christopher T. Adams, District 37B
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Megan Cook, Member, Easton Town Council
Ron Engle, Member, Easton Town Council
Pete Leshner, Member, Easton Town Council
Alan Silverstein, Member, Easton Town Council