

EXHIBIT 26

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Prince George's County
Office of the Health Officer

March 26, 2021

Kevin McDonald, Chief
Certificate of Need
Maryland Health Care Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299

Subject: Letter of Support – Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center's Certificate-of-Need Application,
Behavioral Health

Dear Mr. McDonald:

As the Health Officer for Prince George's County, I appreciate the opportunity to offer my support for the Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center's Certificate of Need (CON) application to establish behavioral health services on its campus in Lanham as part of a comprehensive behavioral health program including 16 adult inpatient beds (CON required) and outpatient services (non-CON).

Prince George's County is home to nearly one million residents and spans an area of 500 square miles, with two acute care units for inpatient behavioral health in the county. In 2019, more than half of the adult admissions from Prince George's County (1,900 cases) were admitted to out-of-county hospitals. More than 900 patients required hospital-to-hospital transfer for psychiatric admission. Prince George's County granted 794 emergency petitions in CY 2019 alone through the court system, whereas Montgomery County granted 376. With a smaller population size, Prince George's County has over double the volume of emergency petitions and significantly lower inpatient acute behavioral healthcare capacity compared to Montgomery County. Additionally, behavioral health services ranked as the second most important issue to them on the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by the County. One of our behavioral health strategic goals is to have a "no wrong door" approach to behavioral health in this county. Because Luminis Doctor's Community Medical Center is one of our largest and busiest hospitals and emergency rooms, we feel that it is imperative to expand their behavioral health service line urgently.

The County is operating with limited bed capacity at a time when public health professionals across the country warn of a "mental health tsunami", an aftermath of the pandemic (Sullivan, 2021). Furthermore, because of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our community, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, national trends indicate that the behavioral health sequelae will be even more tremendous for our predominantly minority community (Czeisler, 2020). As published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, statewide analysis of suicide mortality in Maryland indicated a doubling of suicides for African Americans during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic while the rates for whites approximately halved (Johnathan, 2020). The new inpatient program will respond to this concerning trend and build the infrastructure need to achieve behavioral health equity within our own community for our current needs and that which is to come.

National trends indicate that after the deinstitutionalization of people with mental health conditions in the 1970s, United States jails have become the site of re-institutionalization (Carroll, 2015). The Prince George's County Department of



Angela D. Alonzo
County Executive

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Corrections (DOC) leadership estimates that approximately 31 percent of inmates are on prescribed psychotropic medications, more than 60 percent have a diagnosable mental health disorder, and more than 80 percent report significant substance use *history*. *According to a national report by the Treatment Advocacy Center, individuals with severe mental illness are sixteen times more likely to be involved in a fatal police shooting than those who are not independent of race (Carroll, 2015). We believe that this facility will be an important step towards moving health related services back into the health sector and out of the criminal justice sector.*

In light of the racial justice movement resurgence in our country after the unfortunate death of George Floyd, our County Executive, Angela Alsobrooks, reallocated \$20 million dollars from the Prince George's County Police Department budget to our County's health budget. We are pleased that these funds are being allocated to this project. The hospital's proposed comprehensive behavioral health program will provide local, direct access to a continuum of mental health services including emergency, acute and transitional care. My staff has diligently been working to support the planning for this space and we are excited about this on-going public/private partnership.

I understand and appreciate that the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) must approve the hospital's plans to add this new inpatient comprehensive behavioral health program. I fully support this project and hope the MHCC will give its favorable recommendation recognizing how this initiative will contribute to the overall health of Prince George's County residents.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ernest L. Carter, MD, PhD,
Health Officer

¹ Carroll, H. (2015). Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters. Retrieved March 18, 2021 from <https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/overlooked-in-the-undercounted>

² Czeisler, MD, Lane IR, Petrosky E, et. al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, June 24-30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020; 59: 1039-1057. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>.



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

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Local Behavioral Health Authority
March 25, 2021

Kevin McDonald, Chief
Certificate of Need
Maryland Health Care Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement – Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center's
Certificate-of-Need Application, Behavioral Health

Dear Mr. McDonald:

As Chair of the Prince George's County Mental Health Advisory Board, I appreciate the opportunity to acknowledge that I am fully aware of the submission of the Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center's (LHDCMC) certificate-of-need application to establish Behavioral Health Services on its campus in Lanham as part of a comprehensive mental health program including 16 inpatient beds and outpatient services.

LHDCMC has a history of providing high-quality and compassionate care to meet the growing needs of area residents. With the great need for mental health services, I'm excited to learn that LHDCMC has plans to create a comprehensive Behavioral Health Program.

I understand and appreciate that The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) must approve hospitals' plans to develop a comprehensive Behavioral Health program. I acknowledge and fully support this project and hope the MHCC understands how much this initiative will contribute to the overall health of Prince George's County residents.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Makeitha Abdulbarr
Chair
Prince George's County Mental Health Advisory Council

cc: Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Behavioral Health Administration

Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA
Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health
55 Wade Ave., Dix Bldg., SGHC
Catonsville, MD 21228

February 11, 2021

Mr. Ben Steffen
Executive Director
Maryland Health Care Commission
4160 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Dear Mr. Steffen,

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) hereby acknowledges notification by Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center (LHDCMC) that they are seeking a Certificate of Need to establish a new 16-bed inpatient psychiatric unit for adults at LHDCMC. They have provided me with a copy of the letter they submitted to you with a description of their project.

The Behavioral Health Administration looks forward to learning more about this program. If you need anything more, feel free to email me at aliya.jones@maryland.gov or call (410) 402-8452.

Sincerely,

Aliya Jones, M.D., MBA
Deputy Secretary Behavioral Health

cc: Marta D. Harting, Esq., Venable LLP
Thomas Andrews
Webster Ye
Stephanie Slowly