

December 3, 2007

Dear Members of the UMMS Board:

When the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) acquired Shore Health System (SHS) here in Easton we were assured that, despite our hospital's new ownership by a Baltimore based entity, our local health care needs would remain paramount.

Now that assurance will be tested by your choice of a location for the planned replacement of Memorial Hospital at Easton – a choice perceived here as probably the most important decision affecting our community in generations.

The Talbot County Council has acquired and offered a new hospital site of more than 200 acres, directly adjacent to Easton, with public sewer, water, utilities and other infrastructure. That site is conveniently accessible by an excellent system of secondary roads that extend, like spokes from a hub, throughout Talbot and into Caroline and Queen Anne's Counties, obviating the need for many patients and emergency vehicles to utilize heavily congested Routes 50 and 404. The location is also close to existing medical offices, clinics, pharmacies, restaurants and motels, as well as critical EMS and law enforcement.

Nevertheless, some SHS officials continue to tout a site on the northern border of Talbot County, in farm fields devoid of infrastructure and with no zoning for a hospital, some eight miles from the location offered by the County. From a business perspective, we and our fellow citizens find this inexplicable.

The few advocates for relocation to the north have suggested that Easton/Talbot County is a "no growth" community, and that UMMS therefore should invest in its future elsewhere. This is nonsense. Here are some facts of which you may be unaware:

- According to the Maryland Department of Planning, Talbot County, percentage-wise, is the fastest growing county in Maryland.
- More than 5,200 residential units have been approved or are under construction in Talbot County right now; these units alone will increase county population by 30%.
- In anticipated debt for new residential development, the town of Trappe (here in Talbot County) ranks second only to Baltimore City, and far ahead of other municipalities such as Annapolis, Silver Spring, Glen Burnie and Frederick.
- According to the Urban Land Institute, Easton has two to three times the amount of commercial/retail space as does the average community of its size, with another half million square feet under construction.
- Easton is home to brand new "big box" Lowe's and Target stores—the only ones between Annapolis and Salisbury. Our restaurants and cultural outlets are lauded in the Washington Post and travel magazines as "must-see" destinations.
- Easton has more NYSE brokerages than does any other Eastern Shore community, including Smith Barney; A.G. Edwards; Ferris, Baker, Watts; Janney Montgomery Scott; and RBC Dain Rauscher.
- A multitude of nationally recognized political, business and financial leaders own homes in

Talbot County, many attracted substantially by the presence of the hospital in Easton.

As these facts demonstrate, Easton/Talbot County unquestionably is the business and cultural center of the Eastern Shore, with a bright future for continued growth, and it would seem to make little business sense to abandon such a superb location.

Moreover, a relocation away from Easton would sever irreparably Memorial Hospital's relationship with the community that has nurtured it throughout the past century. During that time the hospital has benefited from close to two million hours of volunteer support. In September, a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala raised more than \$200,000, and earlier this year a new rehab wing was opened thanks to a donation of \$1,000,000 from a local resident. Gifts of this magnitude have not been uncommon, and our local Memorial Hospital Foundation now has assets in excess of \$50,000,000. It would be wishful thinking to assume that this unflinching volunteer support and local financial largesse would follow a new hospital to a site in the cornfields eight miles north of our town.

The wrong decision on the future location of our hospital would deal a devastating blow to the Easton economy, where our principal industry is based on medical and health care. And proposing a site at highway 404 or beyond would contravene Talbot County's Comprehensive Plan, and would flatly violate every tenet of Maryland's much admired smart growth policy.

The above considerations demonstrate that the most responsible business course would be to relocate the new hospital at the proposed County site adjacent to Easton. Of course, we acknowledge that we are influenced in our thinking by our hospital's central role in our community and our economic life. To provide you with an overview of the intensity of such local sentiment we are enclosing, and hope you will consider, the following:

- An eight-minute DVD that reflects the thoughts and concerns of a broad cross-section of community leaders;
- The results of our petition, urging SHS to locate its new facility in or adjacent to Easton, and signed by 10,000 of our hospital's friends and neighbors;
- A selection of newspaper clippings/comments reflecting community views; and
- A summary of an economic impact study, undertaken by the nationally respected Sage Policy Group, assessing the effect of a departure of our hospital from Easton.

In closing, we should tell you who we are: Talbot Preservation Alliance is a bipartisan volunteer citizens organization that, over the past decade, has had much success in lobbying on behalf of managed growth and in support of political leaders dedicated to preserving our quality of life. The Citizens Committee is comprised of a cross section of community leaders who have come together with a determination to keep our hospital in or adjacent to Easton.

All of us thank you for your careful consideration of these comments. We would be pleased to provide further information, and would welcome a meeting with UMMS representatives.

Very truly yours,

Nancy Clem

Russell Dize

Co-Chairs, Citizens Committee

Thomas T. Alspach

President, Talbot Preservation Alliance