

A letter to the boards of Shore Health System, University of Maryland Medical
March 25, 2007

A Talbot County Citizens Committee has united to address the proposed expansion and relocation of Memorial Hospital at Easton(MHE). It represents a broad spectrum of the county — from Easton to Tilghman and Cordova, and with backgrounds in business, medicine, health care, public and community service.



We unanimously adopted positions supporting modernization and expansion of MHE — and, most importantly, locating any new hospital facility in or adjacent to Easton. Thus, we strongly endorse the proposal put forward by the Talbot County Council and believe it should represent a win-win solution that will best serve the interests of all.

The hospital was created 100 years ago to serve our community's medical needs and has since been supported and sustained by generous benefactors from all segments of our people and through public funding, including a foundation whose resources are dedicated to the hospital.

Of course, MHE, Shore Health System (SHS) and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) must operate in a businesslike, efficient manner, but they also are required to serve the public interest that is the foundation for their non-profit, charitable and tax-exempt status.

As the largest employer in Talbot County and together with the large associated medical and health care business sector, SHS is vital to our local economy in general and to the Town of Easton in particular. Talbot County, with a growing population of senior citizens and the oldest average age in Maryland, depends upon Memorial Hospital for reliable, convenient and frequently urgent medical care. The proposed location on the northern edge of Easton will be readily accessible to Talbot and to our Eastern Shore neighbors.

More specifically, the Citizens Committee:

- Supports the objectives of MHE, SHS and UMMS to modernize and expand the hospital's facilities as public service needs dictate and available resources permit;
 - Strongly urges that any new and expanded hospital facilities, not on the present site, be located in or adjacent to the Town of Easton, with available public sewer, water and other utilities, emergency management, law enforcement, road improvements, airport and other public services and infrastructure;
 - Strongly opposes locating facilities at a site that does not meet such needs, and that would jeopardize the town and county economies, reduce medical care accessibility and violate smart growth precepts;
 - Specifically endorses the county council proposal for a location on county property near the Talbot Community Center on Route 50, and Easton Town Council support for this course;
 - Supports, regardless of the expansion of MHE, the continued active use of the present facilities in the Town of Easton, effectively integrated with any new hospital facilities;
 - Supports the objectives of our neighbors in Queen Anne's County to have a modern, accessible medical emergency facility affiliated with MHE, and our neighbors in Dorchester County to maintain Dorchester General Hospital, to meet the needs of their citizens; and
 - Uphold a location for a new, expanded hospital that would maintain and enhance community pride, volunteer service and support for the Memorial Hospital Foundation.
 - We believe that, by collaborating in good faith, we can accomplish an outcome of mutual benefit for MHE, SHS, UMMS, the people of Talbot County and our neighbors on the Eastern Shore. We can avoid unnecessary, protracted, and costly controversy, litigation and regulatory impediments.
 - Thus the undersigned Citizens Committee calls upon the members of the SHS and UMMS Boards of Directors and their managements to embrace the county council proposal and move forward together.
- Nancy Clem and Russell Dize, co-chairs, Carole Abruzzese, Jeff Adelman, Lee Bailey, Brad Baker, M.D., Walter Black, Bob Blades, Barbara Matzen Coit, Hugh Dawkins, Charlene DeShields, Sheldon Goldgeier, M.D., Tony Harrington, Ernie Heinmuller, Dan Higgins, Ted Lewers, M.D., Harriet and Eric Lowrey, John Masone, Tina Mills, Tom Moore, Mike Newnam, John North, Catherine Poe, Marty Read, Alvin Sanger, Polly Shannahan, Richard Smith, Marie U'Ren, Burton Wilson and Laird Wise.*