

Re: Planning for new hospital in or near Easton, MD

Date: June 18, 2007

Dear :

I am a retired lawyer living in Easton. I have had a residence here for the last eight years, and with my retirement from full-time employment last year, I am able to devote a great deal more of my time to community and civic affairs in this unique and wonderful place to live and work. I am writing to you in your capacity as a member of the Board of Directors of the University of Maryland Medical System Corporation.

For the past eight months or more, I have been attempting to follow the statements and actions of the CEO of Shore Health, Joseph Ross, in connection with the consideration by Shore Health (and ultimately UMMS) of the most appropriate site for a new hospital for this area. At first, Mr. Ross's comments stressed that no decision as to a site had been made and that all feasible options would be considered and evaluated. In fact, that was the gist of his initial, rather tepid comment in response to the offer of the Talbot County Council to provide a 90-acre site for the new hospital just north of Easton, at virtually no cost to Shore Health.

More recently, it has become apparent that Mr. Ross is in fact engaging in an extended campaign to sell the idea that the hospital should not be located near Easton, but instead should be sited either at the intersection of MD Highway 404 and Route 50 or even further north at the intersection of Route 50 and MD 213. He has made such suggestions privately, and the cat is now out of the bag publicly since the publication of comments in the June issue of Chesapeake Business Ledger.

As pointed out in an article by Nancy Clem in yesterday's *Sunday Star*, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience, the Ledger contains an article describing a speech Mr. Ross gave at Chesapeake College regarding planning for a new regional medical center in "northern Talbot County in the area where all the major highways on the Mid-Shore (US Routes 50 and 301, State Routes 404 and 213) are within a couple of miles". It said Ross is also considering what services would continue to be offered at Memorial Hospital "[i]f the new hospital is not near Easton." In the same issue, Mr. Ross's comments are echoed by those of Stuart Bounds, President of Chesapeake College, which refer to planning for "dramatic development" in the farm fields around the College, and the meaning of that phrase is made clear by a third article mentioning a recent amendment to the Queen Anne's County Community Plan for the Chesapeake College area to provide for a "regional medical center".

Naturally, I don't know the extent of your personal involvement in this planning and decision-making process, if any, as a member of the Board of UMMS, but you should know that if this direction continues to be pursued, Shore Health (and UMMS) will be risking serious adverse consequences to the relationship with the hospital's primary

patient market in Easton and Talbot County. There is already a great deal of distrust of Mr. Ross among those who have paid attention to his comments about this process in recent months, which have been misleading, to say the least.

That circle of disillusioned and disaffected constituents will widen considerably if the public signals disfavoring a move away from Easton are ignored, and a fight ensues over an attempt by Shore Health and UMMS to relocate the hospital to the 404/50 intersection, or worse, the intersection at 213. The near-total absence of merit in either of those locations, as noted in a second article in yesterday's *Sunday Star* by Jack Fischer (copy enclosed), will provide ample basis for energized and resourceful citizens to challenge such an attempted outcome, in every forum and venue provided by law.

Finally, in thinking about whether it is worth it for UMMS to allow Shore Health to pursue this misguided plan, you should also consider the long-term cost of such an effort even if it were to be ultimately successful. How can it be in the interests of Shore Health and UMMS to foster a bitter and divisive controversy with what is currently its core market, and which is likely to continue to be at least one of its primary constituencies in the future? A "win" by the companies in the zoning and other battles to come, regarding the 404 and/or 213 site(s), would be the very epitome of a pyrrhic victory, given the damage it would leave behind in the community that is the economic and cultural center of the Mid-Shore area (and which has nurtured and supported the hospital from its inception).

Such a result would be especially tragic because it would be wholly gratuitous and unnecessary, given the superior alternative sites available in or around Easton, which Talbot County citizens and leaders are eager for the hospital authorities to pursue in good faith. The UMMS Board should direct the management of Shore Health to get serious about selecting one of those alternatives and to work with local leaders to bring it to fruition.

Sincerely,

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