

11 Feb 2016

Dear Senators and Delegates,

As President of the Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) we support the array of complaints you have heard regarding Merriweather as it is apparently warranted. On September 10, 2015, HCCA sent you a six page letter with our recommendations. You as legislators need to have the noise toned down with the levels it was prior to the increasing of the decibel levels by the Howard County Delegation. You need to exercise your authority for your constituents.

HCCA would like to thank the Delegation for passing HOCO Bill-9 – the access to Public Information for Howard County School System as we sent you a letter in support.

I am also here tonight for you to consider an extremely important quality of life issue. I ask you for your support and enactment of Senate Bill 12 which is a Prince George's County Bill introduced and sponsored by Senators Rosepepe and Hershey. It is as a direct result of the disaster that is taking place at Laurel Hospital. I would like for you to look at it and ask yourself would you want Howard County General Hospital to be in the same situation as Laurel and now Chestertown hospitals. I have provided you a hardcopy of the Bill. It is an act concerning "Health Care Facilities regarding the closures or partial closures of Hospitals to have County Board of Health Approval." HCCA would like for the Howard County Delegation to enact the same Bill for Howard County to ensure we citizens are protected by having safe-guard measurements in place. Just because our one hospital is owned by Johns Hopkins doesn't mean it couldn't happen to us. As you know when a hospital wants to open they have to justify a certificate of need however as the Bill states on page 2, "A certificate of need is not required to close any health care facility or part of a health care facility if at least 45 days before the closing or partial closing of the health care facility, including a State hospital, a person proposing to close all or part of the health care facility files notice of the proposed closing or partial closing with the Commission."

This current situation is inexcusable and needs to be rectified to protect our quality of life. There should be more stringent rules in place for closures just like there is when a hospital wants to open. This Bill starting on Page 2, line 17 to Page 3, line 12 provides a means where the public is better protected from such a catastrophe. As our representatives it is your responsibility to ensure our quality of life is in no way threatened. We ask you to apply these common sense measurements as this Bill does. It is incumbent of you to please consider adopting the Prince George's Senate Bill 12 for Howard County. There is no doubt we would all be able to breathe better knowing that we are protected from a disaster that we can ill afford to experience.

Thank You.

Stuart Kohn
HCCA, President