

Date: 23 Dec. 2017

Subject: Letter to the Editor

Stop, Look, and Please Listen as our Quality of Life Needs Full Support. Our Howard County Hospital is in an emergency situation. Quite simply we residents need HELP! The Hospital is requesting \$5million for next year's budget, and \$3 million annually for expansion to support our community.

This is certainly justified when one considers Howard County's population of 317,233 according to the 2016 Census. In addition, future growth projections continue to be prolific. When you examine the following FY-16 statistics found on the Hospital's website, it is impressive, but exemplifies the major concern. The Hospital provided services to approximately 220,000 people or 69% of the County Population, evaluated and treated 78,072 patients in the Emergency Room or 25% of the County Population, admitted to or observed in the Hospital 25,205 patients, performed 12,390 surgeries, delivered 3,597 babies, provided outpatient services to 68,680 patients, and provided outreach and wellness programs to more than 40,000 people.

We, the Howard County Citizens Association, only hope our decision makers will readily see that the patients (us) require strong support in an attempt to ensure our Quality of Life in no way deteriorates because of poor strategic planning. When the Hospital, President, Steven Snelgrove stated to the County Council in September (Howard County Times, 9 Nov. 2017, pg. 6): "We just see huge growth and need going forward. The aging of the population alone is going to more than consume probably any capacity we can develop in the short term. We really need to get on this now."

Yes – based on the aforementioned, this budget request needs to be the County's Highest Priority and immediate attention.

Stu Kohn

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