



**Howard County Citizens Association**

*Since 1961...*

*The Voice Of The People of Howard County*

Date: 13 May 2019

Subject: **To Reinstate the Promised Budget Funding to the Hospital**

Good afternoon. I am Stu Kohn, the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA. Part of the HCCA Mission Statement is to maintain and improve the quality of life and delivery of services to obtain orderly growth and development in the best interests of its residents and the environment. We are not against development, but we are very much against any development when the infrastructure is not adequate. Infrastructure includes not only roads and schools, but quality of life issues such as the Hospital, the Police, Fire and EMS. We are asking for the funding which was promised to the Hospital to be reinstated.

Your hospitality to include the promised funding would be a major step in the right direction. We simply cannot afford to continue the ongoing massive development with any sort of strategic plan when it comes to the health of our county. Steve Snelgrove, the President of Howard County General Hospital has clearly stated numerous times – with an aging population and the growth rate of the County the Hospital cannot sustain this outcome. Yes – he is very concerned as we all should be!

We sent You and County Executive Ball a letter on 26 April, titled “Consideration of County Funding to Howard County General Hospital Needs to be Reinstated.” In this letter we listed the FY 2018 Hospital Utilization statistics. The numbers are very impressive, but in a negative way because the Hospital has a difficult time in handling the workload which is only going to be magnified by the continued growth. For example, the Hospital in the past fiscal year provided services for 200,000 people, evaluated and treated 78,049 patients in the Emergency room, admitted 21,417 patients, performed 10,693 surgeries, delivered 3,369 babies, provided outpatient services to 52,063 patients and serviced 30,000 individuals with outreach, health and wellness programs.

HCCA has been involved with the hospital for the last decade. We are proud to say we not only brought the problem with Yellow Alerts occurring in the Emergency room to the Council, but worked with the past President, Vic Broccolino and his staff to have this reduced. We have indeed been privileged to be associated with Mr. Snelgrove. We fully believe the Hospital as the center of ensuring we have a vital and thriving facility should by all means be the Number One priority in the budget. By replenishing the funding which was unfortunately taken away it would mean the following would prevail to benefit the residents of our County.

- \* A comprehensive breast health center to allow Howard residents to get full services in the community.

- \* An expanded cardiac intervention program to allow for a doubling of catheterizations which would go a long way in preventing heart attacks.
- \* Improvements to allow reduced waiting times in the Emergency room.
- \* The community population health and wellness programs to address health equity issues to prevent readmissions.
- \* Routine upgrades to the facility and the replacement of beds and equipment would be advantageous.

We often talk about “Smart Growth” but Smart Growth should not only stand for Sensible, Manageable, Accessible, Reliable, Traffic, but to have a real plan for any increased growth to ensure the Hospital can handle the workload now and in the future. I am sure many of you have seen the movie, “A Few Good Men.” Do you remember what Jack Nicholson said to Tom Cruise, “You can’t handle the truth.” This should perhaps be changed in our case to “We Can’t Handle the Truth.” The truth is that by you reestablishing the Hospital funding which was promised during the next 4 years there is no doubt the Aging Population and the continued growth rate would be a far healthier environment.

County Executive Ball said it best, “Moving our Community forward with innovative, transparent, proactive, and sensible leadership that remains rooted in the values and quality of life we cherish.” This is a saying that is very meaningful only if it becomes reality. In addition refer to the Press Release dated 29 March when the County Executive Ball stated, “Our goal is to name Howard County the healthiest community in the Country.”

Thank You for listening and a bigger THANKS by seeing that the people of Howard County get the BEST CARE that money can buy. We hope by you reinstating the funding for our only Hospital as was promised will no doubt bring a much healthier County for us ALL. This would be an investment you shouldn’t deny.

Stu Kohn  
HCCA President