



Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

Date: 26 April 2019

Subject: **Consideration of County Funding to Howard County General Hospital Needs to Be Reinstated**

Dear County Executive Ball,

We the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA would appreciate your consideration to follow through to include in the County budget the funding of the Howard County General Hospital (HCGH) as was promised by your predecessor. The former County Executive, in his FY19 budget cover letter, said the county is “providing \$5 million over the next five years, starting with \$500,000 this year. The money will be used to build a two-story addition that will add...an inpatient psychiatry unit and a short stay observation unit.” Howard County has a long history of pledging – and then fulfilling the pledge – to contribute toward capital expansion at HCGH. Quite simply the Hospital cannot recoup capital expenses in the rates charged to patients.

As you know, HCCA has testified over the years as to the significance of the Hospital to ensure we can obtain the best care possible. Please refer to our testimony on 1 May 2018 to County Executive Kittleman -- <http://howardcountyhcca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/HCCA-Testimony-Hospital-Budget-to-Council.pdf> as to the importance of such funding and the potential benefits for all your constituents regarding the future health of the County. We simply can't afford not to fund the hospital if we care about the welfare of all. When you consider that we have an “aging population, the continuous development, only one hospital for our substantial population of over 323,000 residents, and growing rapidly the following HCGH FY2018 Utilization Statistics are daunting at best:

Fiscal Year 2018 Utilization Statistics

- HCGH provided services to approximately 200,000 people
- Evaluated and treated 78,049 patients in the Emergency Rooms
- Admitted to or observed in the hospital 21,417 patients
- Performed 10,693 surgeries; of these, 2,851 were performed in the hospital and 7,842 were performed as outpatient procedures.
- Delivered 3,369 babies
- Provided outpatient services to 52,063 patients (including laboratory / excluding outpatient surgery)
- Provided outreach, health promotions and wellness programs to over 30,000 people

As a Councilman you and Councilwoman Jen Terrasa saw the importance of attempting to ensure that Quality of Life Issues including the Hospital be considered to be a part of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance which HCCA has been promoting for years. We are sure based on your appreciation for your constituents and their welfare that the Health of ALL Howard County residents are a major priority for you and your administration. We are very pleased you recognize that the population health and community-facing programs the Hospital is pursuing are worthy of the partnership, support and benefit for Howard County.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, "The first wealth is health." We believe this quote says it all as the "Wealth" of our County depends on the "Health" of our residents. This should unequivocally be the number one priority and we would hope it will be yours. It is too important a subject not to be. We would appreciate you renewing the commitment from the previous administration as it is undoubtedly the right thing to do. Your feedback would be appreciated and we hope it will be positive for the betterment of the County.

Sincerely,

Stu Kohn
HCCA President