



Community and Economic Development Advisory Board **BOARD STATEMENT ON THE MEDICAL HOSPITAL TASK FORCE**

Responding to Commission direction during their December 13, 2016 regular meeting pertaining to the Resolution 2016-R-21 creating a Medical Hospital Task Force, below is a summary of our discussions and recommendations.

Discussion points

- **Continue the research and fact-finding on how hospitals operate and why North Port has not been able to get a hospital partner up to this point.**
 - Revenue and profitability of area hospitals; it seems some of the area hospitals, contrary to what we have heard, are profitable – including Englewood Hospital
 - Which activities provide more profit to hospitals? We need to understand if procedures and surgeries geared more toward the older population do translate into larger revenues for hospitals, versus pediatric care
 - Having a wide network of doctors seems to be crucial to establishing a hospital – find out how to build; what makes doctors choose to move to an area? What are other hospitals doing to incentivize medical professionals to move to their community? How big a role does place-making play into this?
 - Emergency room patients – numbers and how many eventually go to the hospital, and which hospital
 - Get the data from all area hospitals – how many calls, what kinds of emergent need, where are North Port patients being transported, how do relatives visit them, how do members of the family provide support when they are travelling many miles
 - Analyze the severity of those cases that are transported out of the North Port Sarasota Memorial Health (SMH) Emergency Room (ER) facility
 - Surrounding hospitals – their long range plan (10-15 years), especially with North Port's growth and the West Villages
 - Decision factors – what are the real obstacles? Other than profits, how strong a role does politics play?
 - Ownership of a hospital/medical facility – who will own it? Find a partner who will be willing to operate a facility in North Port
 - Look into the importance of proximity – example: a 3-month old had to be rushed to the North Port ER Center, then to Sarasota Memorial Health then to Tampa Children's Hospital; North Port is young and our population growth also comes from births, not just migration (as opposed to the state)



- o Conduct a specific analysis of how the pediatric unit at Sarasota Memorial Health and Bayfront Port Charlotte are doing; based on experience and anecdotes these two units are always at capacity
- **Understand further the Certificate of Need (CON) approval process**
 - o Venice Hospital was able to get approval – seek out their consultant, understand how they did their application, despite the fact that they did not really add more beds
 - o CON Process – get the consultant to explain the approval process, someday North Port will reach 100,000 residents (and more), it would be unacceptable that no hospital will be located within the city at that time
 - o Lobby state politicians – get our local representatives on our side
 - o Understand why the area hospitals are contesting North Port's need for a hospital; is there truly a lack of market demand; or is the problem coming from the inefficiency of area hospitals that they cannot realize profit
 - o Hire the best consultants, particularly those that have gotten CON approvals
 - o Stay informed and connected to AHCA as decisions are made by individuals, subject to political circumstances
- **Analyze future the healthcare and medical trends**
 - o So much uncertainty right now with health care laws changing, we need to get the experts to help us understand potential trends and help us respond in a way that will benefit North Port
 - o What is the future of Medicare?
 - o North Port also needs a good network to provide preventive care
 - o There is also the national trend toward providing more quality care which will also create a potential challenge of access to healthcare
 - o Analyze and identify specialty areas that will pull in a hospital; is it pediatrics?
 - o North Port is growing – who are our future residents and their medical needs? How about West Villages, they will have a different demographic and will perhaps drive the argument
 - o Future growth should be a no-brainer in justifying a full-service medical facility, we have to be ready; if it was found feasible in Venice, why can it not be feasible in North Port?
 - o The lack of availability of talent in the medical field is tied to the challenges faced by higher education, perhaps North Port can collaborate with partners to get in front of the talent pool, ahead of other communities



- **Take ownership of the problem**
 - o The lack of a hospital for a 64,500+ city creates a moral responsibility for city government to take care of its residents' health and well-being
 - o Pediatrics emergent care only available in Fort Myers or Tampa, this is not acceptable for a young city
 - o Find another partner other than those represented in the area
 - o Pursue a hospital or healthcare facility with the highest priority, this will contribute to the economic health of North Port
 - o North Port is poised to grow even more, do not wait until this becomes a bigger problem
 - o We do not want to be the big city that travel to a small town for health care

Recommendations

The members of the advisory board are fully aware of the complex nature of the problem presented to us. Yet we fully support the community's outcry for a full-service medical facility that would put North Port first. Here are the 3 ways we feel we can move the process along to find at least one solution:

- Approach Sarasota Memorial Health and convince them to put into their long range plan the expansion of the current North Port ER into a fully functioning hospital; using the rationale that the City will only grow even more and it will be cost effective for them to approach their imminent expansion in this manner;
- Continue to pursue a medical hospital to locate to North Port despite the approval of the 2 hospitals in Venice; the creation of a medical task force is certainly one way to continue this process;
- Look at this community need from a new and fresh approach. With the future of the CON process still unknown, find a way to facilitate bringing in a comprehensive medical facility that would partner and collaborate with existing medical providers and still address the emergent health and medical needs of North Port.