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The Honorable Marilyn Praisner  
President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

The Honorable George Leventhal  
Chair, Health & Human Services Committee  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council Members Praisner and Leventhal:

Some members of the Montgomery County Council have expressed interest in reviewing opportunities for the Council to weigh in on Washington Adventist Hospital's plans to relocate the hospital to a new location in Montgomery County, while maintaining some health services at our current location in Takoma Park.

The new location is on undeveloped land adjacent to major roadways and near the center of the hospital's existing geographic service area. The new facility and the reuse of our current campus will allow us to strengthen the region's health care infrastructure, ensure the hospital has a strong future and provide improved access to care for all in our communities.

We support data collection and analysis on health care issues in our region by the Council and other affected stakeholders, and we remain committed to transparency and openness about our plans. Since our plans are integrally related to the rapidly-evolving health care needs of our local communities, we believe any analysis of our plans should be conducted in the context of the broad issues of health care access for all local residents and how services might best be delivered for the benefit of the community.

As we all know, Washington Adventist Hospital faces a number of challenges that limit the hospital's ability to meet the growing health care needs of the communities it serves. Absent a financially and clinically viable plan for the hospital's long-term future, the region's health care system faces the potential of a drastic reduction in health care access and services.

Our mission is to deliver excellent healthcare through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing.

Washington Adventist Hospital • Hackettstown Regional Medical Center • Adventist Home Care Services  
Shady Grove Adventist Hospital • Greater Washington Sleep Disorders Centers  
Adventist Senior Living Services • Potomac Ridge Behavioral Health System  
Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland

Failure to address these issues has dramatic consequences. One only need to look at facilities in Prince George's County and the District of Columbia to see what happens when hospitals are unable to respond proactively to challenging issues.

Montgomery County hospitals have recently moved forward on a number of changes and developments to ensure they are able to continue effectively serving their communities long term. Suburban Hospital initiated a new cardiac program. Holy Cross Hospital's recent expansion project provides our communities with new operating rooms, doctor's offices and patient suites. A new patient tower is under construction at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, and the hospital opened a freestanding emergency medical facility in Germantown last year. Currently, Suburban Hospital is planning a major expansion, while Montgomery General Hospital is planning an expansion and is exploring a sale or partnership with another hospital, possibly Holy Cross Hospital. All of these changes and developments indicate that Montgomery County hospitals are engaged in long-range planning and are making the necessary investments to meet growing patient needs.

We suggest the Council consider the above-referenced plans, including our plan for Washington Adventist Hospital, in the context of a county-wide review of health care services. We believe this would serve the broader interests of health care access in Montgomery County and surrounding communities. Questions that might be addressed include:

- How will access to care be improved for uninsured individuals?
- How can health disparities be better addressed?
- What challenges do hospitals and other health care providers face in recruiting physicians, nurses and other clinical staff?
- What role do physicians play in the health care delivery system (including on call coverage), and what capacity does each hospital have for attracting physicians?
- What are the changing trends related to inpatient care and outpatient care at hospitals?

Once these essential issues have been explored, the Council may find it useful to assess the various plans of major hospitals, and to seek a deeper understanding of the following:

- How will recent investments/expansion/new services of local hospitals affect cost, quality, and access to care?
- How have these investments affected the financial viability of local hospitals?

