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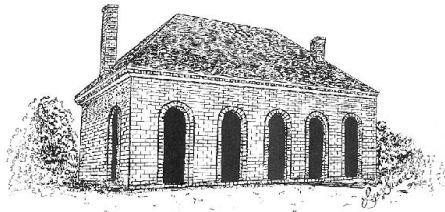
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December 29, 2022

Colin M. Greene, MD, MPH  
State Health Commissioner  
Virginia Department of Health  
109 Governor Street, 13th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: COPN Request No. VA-8687  
Henrico Doctors' Hospital, Establish Ashland Hospital

Dear Dr. Greene:

Hanover County has been made aware of interest from Henrico Doctors' Hospital to establish an Ashland Hospital. Timely access to health care services for our residents is a priority for our department. We respect the COPN process and the role of the Virginia Department of Health in that consideration. The COPN process is independent of the local land use determination decided by the Hanover Board of Supervisors. We do understand that Henrico Doctors' Hospital has submitted their application and time frames for both your consideration and the local land use/zoning processes will run concurrently. On behalf of the Hanover Fire-EMS, we strongly support and respectfully request you approve Henrico Doctors' Hospital COPN application to establish Ashland Hospital.

Hanover County Fire-EMS operates sixteen stations to provide professional fire, rescue, and emergency medical services 24 hours a day. We strive to be a high-performance emergency response and mitigation system that meets the current and future needs of the citizens of Hanover County and the many travelers passing through our community.

It would be the goal of Hanover County to work with Henrico Doctors' Hospital and our citizens on this project through a significant local public input process as part of a comprehensive rezoning. This will include, but not be limited to, evaluations on traffic impacts, access reviews and mitigation strategies as identified, any known environmental impacts, and other raised concerns. The location for Ashland Hospital is just off Exit 86 on Interstate 95, making it highly accessible for residents and for travelers passing through Hanover County as well.

In an emergency, when time is of the essence, the difference between transporting a patient to Ashland Hospital versus continuing to other Henrico Doctors' Hospital campuses or facilities further from this location could determine whether a patient survives to see their family again. Ambulances from Hanover County must currently travel via Interstate 95 and State Routes 1 and 301 to reach Richmond-area hospitals. This transport often occurs during periods of high traffic congestion, further delaying critical medical treatment. In addition to improving the accessibility of critical emergency care, Ashland Hospital will afford existing patients of Henrico Doctors' Hospital comprehensive, high-quality medical care in a location that is much closer to where those patients live and work every day.

The establishment of Ashland Hospital will reduce transport times and enable our EMS units to return to service more quickly, improving care and service for Hanover County residents and those traveling through the County. Each time one of our ambulance units is called into service, it remains dedicated to the call and is unavailable to respond to additional requests. This includes transport time to an emergency department, restocking and any decontamination of the unit, and return time. The proposed location for this facility is highly accessible via Interstate 95 and State Routes 1 and 301, which will mean our EMS crews are able to get back on the road as soon as possible so they are available for the next patient in need of assistance.

One of the most important aspects of providing emergency services is ensuring timely access to emergency medical care and advanced diagnostic imaging, including CT services. As soon as we respond to a call, we know that we are fighting the clock. I am sure you are familiar with the axiom “time is brain” as it applies to stroke patients. Tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, is an effective treatment for ischemic stroke when administered within an hour of the onset of the stroke. For patients with ischemic stroke, tPA can help restore blood flow to brain regions affected by a stroke, thereby limiting the risk of long-term damage and functional impairment. However, tPA should not be administered to patients with a hemorrhagic (or bleeding) stroke because tPA would make the bleeding worse. Therefore, patients exhibiting signs of stroke must be transported as soon as possible to an emergency room with a CT scanner to rule out a hemorrhagic stroke before tPA can be safely administered. This is an example of how the reduced transport times that Ashland Hospital will create will make a significant difference in outcomes for many patients.

On behalf of Hanover County Fire-EMS, I thank you for your consideration of Henrico Doctors’ Hospital’s COPN application to establish an Ashland Hospital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Piland', written over a horizontal line.

Jethro H. Piland, III, MPA, NRP, FP-C  
Chief  
Hanover Fire-EMS