Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee Meeting

August 15, 2013, 2:00 p.m., Eastville

Members Present: Spencer Murray, Larry LeMond, Pat Coady, Martina Coker, Willie Randall.
Also present: Dr. Molera, County Administrator Katie Nunez, and Director of Emergency Services

Hollye Carpenter.

The first meeting of the Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee was convened at 2:00 p.m. Larry LeMond was selected as Chairman and Pat Coady as Vice-Chairman. A copy of the resolution creating the Ad-Hoc Emergency Committee Meeting was provided to all members.

ORGANIZATION AND DISCUSSION OF TASK FORCE GUIDELINES

Mr. LeMond provided a history of the efforts of the private group that has been meeting for about a year focused on looking at other medical care options while the county was litigating the hospital's Certificate of Public Need (COPN). With the resolution of the COPN in favor of Riverside Shore Memorial and the future home of a new hospital to be in Accomack County, the Board of Supervisors wanted to receive a report outlining the issues and options available to ensure adequate medical care is provided to the residents and visitors of Northampton County, whether through the consideration of a stand-alone emergency room facility, increased EMS coverage, or some other solution not yet identified.

Mr. Randall indicated that the County has a window of about 2 years before the new hospital is constructed and open for service and we need to position ourselves to have a plan in place to ensure care is available in a timely fashion for our residents, especially those located in the southern end of the county. Through his former role as a hospital board member, Mr. Randall shared the process they engaged in: they hired a consultant to help the hospital focus on their needs and assisted in soliciting proposals from the hospital vendors which in turn led to Riverside submitting a proposal that the local hospital board considered the most advantageous. During the hospital board discussion, the concept of Critical Access Hospitals was discussed and it was considered to locate one in the north and one in the south but Riverside officials indicated that 2 hospitals would not work financially. He indicated that the new hospital has already been downsized from the COPN application from 78 beds to 56 beds.

Dr. Molera asked if anyone knows exactly what will remain on the current medical campus in Nassawadox. Mr. Randall responded that Riverside will tear the main "hospital" tower down and that the agreement with Riverside says that they will convert the cancer center building to an Urgent Care Center and that the Cancer Center will move with the hospital. The agreement also stipulates that Riverside must build a new hospital within 5 years of the date of the agreement. If Riverside fails to abide by the agreement, then the Shore Hospital Foundation can sue them.

Mrs. Coker stated that there is no regulatory approval needed for a freestanding emergency room.

Mr. Murray reviewed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that dictates the meetings of this committee are open meeting and that minutes will be taken. He requested that any member of this committee needs to disclosure if they have any conflicts or relationships with Riverside so that all

parties are aware of these affiliations. Dr. Molera responded that he is not under contract with Riverside but is under contract with the anesthesiologist group. Mr. Randall responded that he is on the Foundation Board of Riverside and that his wife has a similar relationship as Dr. Molera's. Mr. Coady responded that he had approached some Riverside officials about the Nassawadox building re-use on behalf of a client. No other members had any affiliations with Riverside.

The committee decided to have the chairman handle all communications to the press and that any communications with any potential providers would flow through the committee. Mrs. Nunez disclosed that the Board of Supervisors has been requested to respond to correspondence from Riverside before they would meet with the Board to discuss future plans of the Nassawadox campus and that one of the assurances Riverside is seeking in that correspondence is that the County would not recruit or engage another medical provider. She indicated that the Board response is still being drafted and would contain language indicating that the County could not make such a commitment.

It was agreed that the committee would meet every other Thursday at 4:00 p.m. with the next meeting to be held on August 29, 2013.

TASK FORCE WORK COMPONENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Mrs. Nunez indicated that she would provide to each member a copy of Director of Emergency Services Hollye Carpenter's presentation to the Board of Supervisors from fall 2012 in which she has provided an analysis of the impact of the hospital's move on EMS services in Northampton County.

Mr. Randall stated that we need to consider how we will pay for this and Emergency Rooms do not sustain themselves.

Mr. Murray responded that he is not positive about the actual costs to run the hospital, based upon recent news articles talking about medical costs and chargemaster costs that highlight the vast disparities between billing practices and actual payments received from insurance companies and Medicare and Medicaid to the hospitals. It is not apparent to him if Riverside Shore Memorial has any actual losses or not. He is not in favor of giving money to Riverside to provide an Emergency Room in Northampton County, especially since Accomack County is getting one for free as part of the new hospital.

Mr. Coady stated that during the hospital presentation when applying for the COPN they indicated that bed space was based on average usage and indicated that outpatient services was flat at Nassawadox. He would like to understand what Riverside is doing about the outpatient market to increase usage and services. He believes we need to examine population trends of the region and do a 10 year trend review as part of this committee's work.

There was discussion about Critical Access Hospitals versus Stand Alone Emergency Rooms and the need to understand the medical reimbursement rates between these two facility types. There was also discussion about the role that helicopter transports play in our medical services on the Shore and the committee needs to understand this better and look at the designated sites for helicopter landings to receive and transport. Ms. Carpenter clarified that the new hospital will not have a trauma 1 or 2 designation.

It was suggested that this committee might want to engage a consultant who specializes in this type of analysis to help the committee.

Mr. Coady asked if the Riverside Memorial study could be provided to the group and Mr. Randall indicated he would find out if that could be provided to the committee.

It was discussed that the committee needs to examine and understand the cross-relationship of existing facilities (i.e., lower Cheriton with Bayview Rural Health, EMS response, helicopter access). The role of Heritage Hall needs to be considered as part of any continuum of care concept.

For the next meeting, the following items will be provided:

1. Willie Randall – copy of charter and bylaws for Shore Health Foundation (he indicated that these have changed to allow the provision of financial assistance to any medical facility, not just the hospital and that the membership can be expanded from the current 9 members to a total of 15 members).
2. Hollye Carpenter & Pat Coady – will research availability, locations, reimbursements, terms of service, etc. for Medevac Services.
3. Katie Nunez – will distribute the State's Rural Health Plan and the EMS Director's presentation from fall 2012 to the Board of Supervisors. Will have staff explore grant opportunities and funding for medical services
4. Martina Coker and Spencer Murray– will provide information on Critical Access Hospitals and Stand Alone Emergency Rooms.
5. Need to talk with the Rural Health Department in Richmond about presentation, resources, and tools to assist in our mission.

It was discussed to recommend to the Board the consideration of Dr. Pam Gray for appointment to this Ad-Hoc Committee – she has worked at Sentara & Rural Health, knowledgeable of fundraising, currently not working and willing to dedicate her time to this committee. Dr. Molera indicated that he is willing to be a part of this group and it was noted that the Board of Supervisors will take that up at their next meeting on August 26, 2013.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 29, 2013 @ 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Nunez
County Administrator