



County of Fairfax, Virginia

Health Care Advisory Board

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 11, 2014

TO: Human Services Council

FROM: Marlene W. Blum, Chairman
Health Care Advisory Board (HCAB)

SUBJECT: Health Care Advisory Board Written Comments on FY 2015 Advertised Budget

As part of its mission, the Health Care Advisory Board (HCAB) annually reviews portions of the County's Advertised Budget that relate to health care in order to advise the Board of Supervisors on particular issues. To accomplish this task, the HCAB reviews the proposed budget documents, develops questions, and meets with agency representatives to discuss any concerns or issues raised by the HCAB. The following items were reviewed by the HCAB at its March 10, Committee of the Whole Meeting:

1. The Health Department Budget, which includes the Division of Patient Care Services, the Division of Environmental Health, and the Office of Emergency Preparedness;
2. The Department of Fire and Rescue Budget, with a focus on the Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS); and
3. Fund 10030 Contributory Fund, with a focus on the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia, Medical Care for Children Partnership, the Northern Virginia Healthcare Center/Birmingham Green Adult Care Residence, and the Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI).

Health Department – Community Health Care Network

The HCAB supports the County Executive's proposed \$1,294,093 increase for the Health Department's FY 2015 budget to support employee compensation, electronic health record system maintenance costs, contracted health services rate increase, and PC replacement costs. While the HCAB is supportive of the Health Department's 3.98% net budget increase, we remain cautious of prior reductions made during previous budget cycles to the Community Health Care Network (CHCN). For example, decreasing specialty care physician payments has further compounded existing supply issues given the lack of specialty providers in our local physician network and increasing referrals outside the service area to the University of Virginia (UVA).

Funding for specialty care within CHCN has been or will be eliminated as contracts expire in FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016. CHCN arranges for and coordinates over 10,000 specialty referrals for patients annually. During the past two years, staff has worked to decrease the number of paid specialists, while increasing pro-bono specialty care (with malpractice

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coverage through the State), resulting in a savings of \$200,000 (from nearly \$500,000 to \$300,000). However, there is an insufficient supply of providers in the community who are willing to provide specialty pro bono care.

As specialists have quit and stopped taking new patients, CHCN has begun to rely more heavily on sending patients to UVA. So, while the care isn't local, it is the same type of specialty care that was once provided locally; however it is burdensome to patients who are vulnerable and are sick.

The purchase of specialty care is not a sustainable model for CHCN, and as a result, staff and physicians from CHCN, Inova Health System, the Medical Society of Northern Virginia, local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and free clinics are working together to develop capacity for specialty care in the community. The HCAB is encouraged by these developments and will continue to monitor ongoing progress.

Furthermore, while the HCAB does not yet know the full impact of these cuts, we are mindful that future adjustments may be needed to address changes, adverse or unintended, to patient care.

Fund 10030 Contributory Fund – Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI)

The HCAB opposes the County Executive's proposed \$1.1 million in FY 2015 funding for the Inova Translational Medicine Institute (ITMI). The HCAB first raised concerns about the Board of Supervisors (BOS) decision to invest \$11 million in ITMI, spread over multiple years, in a June 19, 2012 memo (Attachment 1).

The HCAB's position remains unchanged: before committing County funding for ITMI, the BOS should thoroughly review the project's feasibility and develop a plan to hold Inova accountable for the Institute's stated goal of economic development. County funding should be conditional on the achievement of measurable objectives for bio-medical and bio-technical development attributable to the work of ITMI (e.g., number of new jobs, number of new marketable businesses, etc.), with a timetable for accomplishing these objectives. Knowledgeable and expert community members should also be asked to participate in the development of goals, key measurements, and milestones.

Furthermore, Inova should be required to provide some shorter term benefits to the community in return for annual contributions that would begin in FY 2015. These benefits could be related directly to ITMI services (e.g., funding genetic testing and pharmaceuticals for those who cannot afford out-of-pocket costs) or other community-identified needs, such as access to pro-bono specialty care, outlined in the discussion above.

Given other demands within the human services system, the HCAB believes that spending millions of County taxpayer dollars in support of ITMI is not the best use of public funds.

If the Council has questions about our recommendations, please contact the HCAB.

Attachment 1: June 19, 2012 Memorandum to the Board of Supervisors on the Inova Translational Medicine Institute.