



August 2, 2011

William Conroy
Acting Commissioner
New Jersey Dept. of Health & Senior Services
John Fitch Plaza
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, N.J. 08625-0360

Re: Meadowlands Hospital and Medical Center, LLC
CN# FR 100201-09-01
Docket No. HUD-C-175-10

Dear Commissioner Conroy:

New Jersey Appleseed Public Interest Law Center, an objector in the aforementioned CN process and a signatory to the Order entered in the aforementioned judicial hearing, submits this letter in support of the recent requests made by Local 5147 of HPAE to your office that a health care monitor be appointed at Meadowlands Hospital and Medical Center ("MHMC") (at the expense of its for-profit operators). Our request, made pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:43G-2.9(a) (permitting DHSS to impose fines, revoke or suspend a license "and/or impose other lawful remedies"), is based on HPAE's and the Department's documentation of deteriorating work conditions at MHMC and CN violations that directly threaten patient and worker safety and pose serious risks to the affected communities' access to safe, affordable and quality health care services.

To date, we have reviewed HPAE's letter to DHSS dated June 24, 2004, in which it lists several CN violations, including allegations that MHMC no longer provides out-patient pediatric services and has terminated its insurance contracts with Horizon BCBS and Aetna, as well as reports issued by DHSS as a result of its on-site investigation on July 6, 2011. Violations of the CN with respect to required Board and Community Advisory Group

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(CAG) composition combined with substantial staff lay-offs, unclear clinical policies and protocols, poor management of nursing staff, and blatant disregard for established clinical safety practices appear to have created a threatening and hostile work environment for staff and an unsafe and hostile medical environment for patients.

As noted in our submission to the Court, upon application of Liberty Healthcare System to transfer its license to operate MHMC to MHA, LLC., New Jersey Appleseed viewed the establishment of a CAG, which would provide ongoing community input to the management of Meadowlands, in addition to the financial reporting and meeting requirements imposed by paragraphs 11, 13, 14 and 15 of the Commissioner's Order, as the functional equivalent of the health care access monitor that we had requested be appointed in accord with the Community Healthcare Assets Protection Act ("CHAPA"). See Submission to Honorable Thomas P. Olivieri by New Jersey Appleseed on behalf of itself, HPAE, and AARP-NJ, dated November 22, 2010 (attached hereto). As you may remember, MHA's lack of hospital administration capacity and expertise and its principal owners' track record at their Xanadu Adult Medical Day Care Center and Roseland Ambulatory Surgery Center led us to urge the State Health Planning Board and the Commissioner to appoint a health care quality monitor who would meet regularly with management and members of HPAE, and report to DHSS on several key aspects of operation. See Letter to Judith Donlan, Chair of SHPB from New Jersey Appleseed, dated September 30, 2010 (attached hereto).

However, CN conditions imposed upon transfer of a community-based hospital to a for-profit investment group, if not properly enforced are empty gestures to the public. As we see at MHMC, not even one full year into the LLC's ownership, failure to comply with CN conditions that were specifically imposed to ensure accountability to the public has resulted in a serious "deterioration of the quality, availability or accessibility of health services in the affected communities." CHAPA, N.J.S.A. 26:2H-7.11(b)

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Steinhagen

Cc: Anne Twomey