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|  | **The Crisis at Prince George’s Hospital and the Future of Health Carein Maryland** |

The crisis at Prince George's Hospital Center (PGHC) and its parent Dimensions Healthcare System (Dimensions) is longstanding. While management missteps have been real and serious, the underlying problem reflects national trends: increasing numbers of inadequate reimbursement under Medicaid, lack of patients with adequate insurance coverage, and resulting extensive use of expensive emergency care.

The time for band-aid solutions has passed. There has been sufficient study of the problems and possible solutions. It is time for action. The Ramirez and Niemann bills shine attention on these problems, but only represent a starting point for resolution of the crisis. Progressive Cheverly hereby offers a set of principles that should guide actions to resolve the immediate and long-term problems.

1. Ensuring health care for the most vulnerable is principally a state function. Resolution of the current crisis - especially in serving those without adequate health insurance - rests primarily with the state. The Governor and General Assembly, working with County officials, should provide adequate funding - including funds to cover long-term bond debt and pension liabilities as well as operating and capital costs - to make the hospital system economically viable for affiliation with another hospital system."

2. Funding for accumulated debt should not be placed exclusively on Prince George’s County residents. Given the inadequate reimbursements for uncompensated care for this hospital system of last resort and its importance as a regional facility, the onus for funding should rest with the state. The viability of PGHC has a statewide impact.

3. All key stakeholders must work collaboratively to reach a solution. These include the Governor, the General Assembly, the County Executive and County Council, Dimensions, Service Employees International Union (representing nurses and almost all other allied and service and maintenance staff at the hospital). The community must have an opportunity to weigh in on any proposals put forth to solve the crisis. proposed solutions.

4. **The ideal solution would be affiliation with a public or not-for-profit private, community-oriented, academic hospital system with a strong commitment to guaranteed service for all.**  PGHC must be transformed into a highly regarded health facility that will attract paying patients with perhaps a strong focus on particular areas of care and a community orientation. For any takeover by a private hospital system, there must be protection built in that will ensure maintaining the broader public mission that PGHC now serves.

5. The rights of workers at the hospital system must be protected during any transition. This includes insuring solvency of the pension system and assuring collective bargaining rights of employees.

6. Protect the land the hospital sits on. Any transfer of land currently owned by the County and/or moving PGHC to another location must include adequate conditions on future use. Protective zoning and full community involvement are vital for any development decisions.

7. Dimensions or its officers should not benefit from any solution, including debt payment and transfer of ownership.

8. We need a universal health care solution. The crisis with the Prince George's Hospital and the Dimensions is merely a symptom of a far-reaching national problem: the lack of a universal health care system that protects all Americans, including the most vulnerable.

 Adopted by Progressive Cheverly, February 1, 2007