

MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 11, 2006

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Medical Care Commission Meeting of October 11, 2006, was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Michael Dennis. On roll call, the following members of the Commission were found to be present: Chairman Michael Dennis, Vice Chairman Robert Friedman, Commission Members Richard Furlaud, Norman Goldblum, and Norman Traverse. Commission Member Stein was not present. Others present were: Mayor Jack McDonald, Council Member William Brooks, Council Member Susan Markin, and Town Clerk Susan Eichhorn.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dennis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved through motion of Commission Member Furlaud, seconded by Commission Member Goldblum, and carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF COMMISSION REPORT FOR THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2006 MEETING

The Commission Report for the September 9, 2006 meeting was approved through motion of Commission Member Furlaud, seconded by Commission Member Goldblum and carried unanimously.

V. DR. FRANCINE GRECO, MEDICAL DIRECTOR, TEQUESTA URGENT CARE CENTER RE: PROPOSED URGENT CARE CENTER IN PALM BEACH

Ms. Susan Markin addressed the Commission, speaking as a resident of Palm Beach, and not as a Council Member. She explained that she had spoken with many residents who had concerns regarding medical care on the Island. As a result, she had been working intensely for the past ten months with Dr. Francine Greco, who was a most qualified emergency trained physician, and had

already provided an urgent care facility in Tequesta, Florida, which was very successful.

Ms. Markin stated that the goal was to get a facility on the Island that the residents could use, to alleviate having to go to Good Samaritan Emergency Room for non-life threatening issues. She introduced Dr. Francine Greco, who would speak about the formulation of the urgent care facility in Tequesta, and the plans for Palm Beach.

Dr. Francine Greco addressed the Commission, providing a slide show, and made the following comments:

She had been an emergency room physician for 21 ½ years before starting the Tequesta Urgent Care Center. She provided her academic and training credentials. She explained that the Center had worked very well with both Jupiter Hospital, the local community hospital, and all of the physicians in the area. The center took all of the major insurances, including Medicare. It was much more affordable than going into the emergency room of a hospital. Once the patient is seen for their urgent care needs, they were then referred back to their family physician if they had one. If they did not have one, they were given a list of physicians in the area.

In response to Dr. Dennis, Dr. Greco explained that an Urgent Care Center in the Town of Palm beach was proposed for 5,000 sq. ft, centrally located, in a building that had been chosen with room to grow. She would like to have a wellness concept attached to it, and eventually a cardiac and physical rehabilitation center. As the center grew, the community needs would be assessed and services would be added.

The proposed plan was for a not for profit center; funds generated would help the center grow. The center would be staffed by board certified emergency room physicians; nurses would be registered nurses. Starting out there would be four doctors, two registered nurses, two medical assistants, four front desk personnel, and one office manager. The center would be opened for 16 hours per day, 365 days per year. Staffing would increase during the season, and the use of the center by people from along Flagler Drive, in West Palm Beach would balance out the decrease of funds collected during the off season. The proposed business plan would need approximately 43.5 million to start out, which would cover everything, including staffing. She was looking for support from the community for the center. She explained that a not for profit would require funds from the community, and all of the money would go back into the facility, and a for profit center would have the profits going to whoever was the backer. She could set up a center either way, and once the funding was in place, she estimated that the center could be up and running in about four months.

Dr. Greco explained that the staff of the center intermingled with both Jupiter Hospital and Palm Beach Gardens Hospital. The staff of the center were emergency physicians, and could recognize what needed to be in a hospital emergency room. Cardiac patients would go to Palm

Beach Gardens Hospital.

Commission Member Traverse encouraged Dr. Greco to start talking with Good Samaritan Hospital in regard to the proposed urgent care center.

Dr. Greco explained that if a hospital owned part of the urgent care center, there would be a higher reimbursement because hospitals have negotiating power with insurance companies.

In response to Mayor McDonald, Dr. Greco advised that there was a high burnout with emergency physicians, and many seasoned emergency room doctors were ready to move on to places such as urgent care centers. Malpractice premiums for an urgent care center were much less, and were based on family practice, rather than emergency. Regarding patients from outside of Palm Beach, Dr. Greco estimated that there were approximately 20,000 people along the eastern side of West Palm Beach, however, she had not broken it down as to how many people would actually be coming from there. The reasons for people coming to an urgent care center would change according to the season — in the summer there were broken bones, fish hooks, etc., during the season there were more medical type things, such as flu, colds, gastroenteritis, etc. The percentage of the practice in Tequesta related to children under 18 years old was less than 20%. Patients that needed care in the middle of the night would go to a hospital emergency room.

Christine Brexel, Administrative Lt., Palm Beach Fire-Rescue Department, expressed concern that patients may request going to an urgent care center, rather than the hospital emergency room. Dr. Greco responded that Fire-Rescue policy and regulations must be followed.

Ms. Pamela Starke Thomas, President and CEO of Life Assist Foundation, which helped people live better and longer. She commented that an urgent care facility decreased trauma by greeting patients with a warm, clean environment and decreased waiting time. In addition, an urgent care facility helped to educate patients. A non profit organization would incorporate the community as board members, overseeing their own health care program.

Ms. Susan Markin commented that her goal, as a resident, was to get an urgent care facility in Palm Beach, whether it be for not for profit or for profit. She maintained that having a not for profit urgent care facility in Palm Beach would be a great thing for the community as a whole, since residents would have the opportunity to put their money into a facility that they, their families and friends were going to use. The long term goal was to have a facility that the community controlled. There were many opportunities to merge community serving facilities when there was a not for profit organization. The planned title of the not for profit urgent care center was Palm Beach Premiere. After the initial start up, the facility would pay for itself. She noted that she was not going to provide a copy of the business plan because it was a competitive market, and it had taken 10 months to put the business plan together, and the numbers are somewhat proprietary.

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Dr. Dennis commented that he did not expect a business plan, however, the Commission was interested in the business philosophy.

Ms. Markin commented that she believed that a higher quality of staff could be obtained through a not for profit center. She noted that the Fire-Rescue Department's goal and directive was to take residents where there was a facility that was certified to give the kind of care that was needed. The target market was the Palm Beach full time (estimated 10,000) and seasonal resident (estimated 30,000), hotel guests (estimated 10,000 annual) and the eastern West Palm Beach resident (20,000). She discussed several other advantages that an urgent care center would bring to the Town of Palm Beach. Medical care would not be limited to only Palm Beach residents.

Dr. Dennis thanked Dr. Greco and Ms. Markin. He noted that one of the major projects for the Medical Care Commission to pursue was to evaluate an urgent care center on the Island, and to encourage free enterprise facilities that would benefit the population.

VI. CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMISSION'S PROJECT LIST, PRESENTATIONS AND BUDGET

Dr. Dennis requested that all Commission members think about the project plan, and identify those areas where expert consultation may be needed, and possibly some funding.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

VIII. NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 17, 2006, 9:30 A.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

IX. ANY OTHER MATTERS

The meeting was recessed at 10:55 a.m. to be reconvened at FAU Schmidt Biotech Center, at approximately 2:00 p.m.

**X. SITE VISITS: (I) FAU SCHMIDT BIOTECH CENTER
(ii) BOCA RATON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

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The meeting was reconvened at 2:00 p.m. at the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Biotech Center. The Commission was greeted by Dr. Willis K. Paull, Professor, Schmidt Fellow for Medical Education, Dr. Jang-Yen Wu, Professor, Biomedical Science, and Dr. Michael L. Friedland, Vice President for Medical Programs and Professor, Biomedical Science. It was explained that last year, the FAU four year medical program was approved, and that the plans were to build a clinical building, and a 500 bed hospital. A tour was conducted of the biotech center, and the simulation center that was used for emergency response training.

The Commission then toured Boca Raton Community hospital. The Commission was greeted by Gary Strack, President and Chief Executive Officer, Richard Greenwald, m. D., vice President of Medical Affairs, and Richard Reynolds, M. D., Senior Vice President/Medical Advancement. Mr. Strack provided a summation of the philosophy of the hospital, concerns of the hospital and noted that there would be a tour conducted of the hospital today. He discussed the relationship with FAU and the University of Miami, and the strengths of the disciplines in Boca Raton Community Hospital. The tour of the hospital began at 4:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Medical Care Commission Meeting of October 11, 2006, was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Michael Dennis, M. D.
Chairman