REPORT OF THE MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON MARCH 7, 2006, IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Medical Care Commission Meeting of March 7, 2006, was called to order by Chairman Michael Dennis in the Town Council Chambers at 9:35 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Dennis.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as printed.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2006 MEETING

The minutes of February 21, 2006, were approved through motion of Commission Member Stein, seconded by Commission Member Furlaud. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

V. RESIDENT SURVEY UPDATE - REVISION OF QUESTION #33

Chair Dennis advised that the revised survey was five pages in length and suggested that the commission go through it line by line to review the survey.

After discussion, Commission Member Furlaud moved that Chair Dennis be given authorization to finalize the survey. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Stein. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion took place on Question No. 17 of the survey [*If you were in need of care for actue, non-life-threatening conditions (e.g. colds, cuts, rash, etc.) where would you prefer to go for treatment?]*, wherein one of the responses was "an urgent care walk-in clinic on the island of Palm Beach (if one were available).

Town Council Member Susan Markin addressed the Commission and strongly suggested that the response remain in the survey, as it would give residents the opportunity to express opinions as to whether an urgent care facility should be available on the island of Palm Beach. The advantage of having it on the survey would be to find out whether residents ere interested in having a facility on the Island.

Commission Member Friedman moved that the response be left in the survey. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Furlaud. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Dennis recognized that Dr. Traverse had conferred with Town

Attorney Randolph regarding the contents of Question No. 18, regarding the possibility of a "Good Samaritan Law."

In regard to Question No. 18, Commission Member Traverse expressed concern regarding the physician specialist shortage and the marked increase in medical liability insurance rates relating to emergency room care. He brought up a possible solution as a "Good Samaritan Law," which would provide immunity to the physicians for the emergency visit, if the patient agreed.

Commission Member Goldblum moved that Question No. 18 be included in the survey. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Friedman. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion took place regarding Question No. 26, regarding the respondents' geographical area.

Commission Member Friedman moved that Question No. 26 be included in the survey. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Furlaud. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

Commission Member Furlaud moved approval of the survey with the understanding that Chair Dennis had the right and obligation to make changes as he saw fit, in order to include the various comments made today by the Commission. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Stein. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

VI. DON STEIGMAN - TENET HEALTCARE SYSTEM

Mr. Don Steigman introduced himself as the senior operatons person responsible for Tenet in South Florida. He applauded the Medical Care Commission for its work in creating a dialogue that will enablehigh quality health care.

Mr. Steigman remarked that every day the industry faced new challenges, such as aging physicians, increase of uninsured people, nd increasing malpractice charges. He provided a synopsis of how the Tenet operation in South Florida, with 15 hospitals, each operating as a business unit, with a management team and a governing board. He explained that his role was to coordinate between the faciliteis.

Mr. Steigman discussed Florida health care and then focused on health care issues specific to Palm Beach. He shared results of several surveys and discussed the acute physician specialist shortage, aging medical staff, nursing shortages, the malpractice crises, and increasing uncompensated care for underinsured and uninsured. He noted that the actual costs of providing care are rising faster than the payments hospitals are receiving. He discussed the emergency room crisis, citing the Emergency Department Report of January 2006, which was provided to the Florida legislature.

Mr. Steigman advised that Tenet was one of the area's largest employers. When Good Samaritan Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital weer acquired in 2001 from Intercoastal, the hospitals had been in poor financial health. Tenet had helped sae jobs, and access to critical services, but as a by-product they ahd alsoincreased the tax base to the community by placing the hospitals on the tax rolls. As part of the agreement with Intercoastal

and the Attorney General, they had agreed to keep the hospitals open for at least ten years with certain core services. They had also agreed to provide the same level of charity care that had previously been provided at those hospitals. In addition, they had agreed that for the first five year period they would invest $36 million in capital facilities, and as of December 2005, they had spent $62 million, with plans to spend $18.4 million for the two facilities.

Mr. Steigman stated that Tenet is committed to improving and ensuring the financial viability of Good Samaritan and St. Mary's. He addressed some of the rumors that had been circulating, and made it clear that tenet did not come here to close the hospital or to sell it for real estate; they were committed to continue to run these facilities. All of the gossip and rumors were just that.

Mr. Steigman commented that he understood that the community has an interest in angioplasty and stroke services at Good Samaritan. He encouraged the continued review of the viability of these services, and noted that a key component was to make physicians in integral part of the process. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to share his perspective on many of the factors that affect health care, and ensured that the Tenet management teams would be available to work with the Medical Care Commission.

Mr. Steigman responded to the following points raised by the Commission:

- The issues affecting Tenet in California would not affect hospital operations in florida.

- The finalized settlement of a lawsuit with the Attorney General in Florida.
- The strong future of Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Both Good Samaritan and St. Mary's being very viable an an integral part of the community.
- The cycle of expenses outstripping revenues.
- City of West Palm Beach redevelopment and its affect on the hospitals.
- Rate of occupancy rate of 40% at Good Samaritan.
- The use of tax dollars by the Health Care District.
- The manpower plan that is being put together by Tenet.
- Emergency room treatment.
- Availability of major academic health centers in Palm Beach County.
- Clarification that the Good Samaritan Hospital was not for sale.
- The governing board structure of community members, business leaders, and physicians.
- Malpractice issues.

- Certificate of Need for Good Samaritan hospital
- Necessary legislative reform.
- Uninsured needs.

Mr. Steigman explained that all of the issues were very intertwined, and perahaps the biggest issue was to resolve the physician supply side, and the aging physician problem in the whole State of Florida. He noted that Palm Beach Gardens Hospital continued to do very well with its cardiac program, and that West Palm Beach was one of the few metropolitan areas in the State of Florida that did not have a heart program, however, the issues related to cardiac care in West Palm Beach had nothing to do with Palm Beach Gardens Hospital.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Stanley Rumbough commented that the Town Council was also meeting on March 14, 2006, which was the date for the next Medical Care Commission Meeting, and that citizens were not able to attend both meetings. He suggested that the Commission may want to revise its schedule in the future, when meeting dates fell on the same day as the Town Council Meetings.

VIII. NEXT MEETING MARCH 14, 2006

Chair Dennis commented that the next meeting of the Medical Care Commission would take place at the South Fire-Rescue Station, and that it would be a public forum. He encouraged the attendance of the public.

IX. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Medical Care Commission Meeting of March 7, 2006, meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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Michael Dennis, M. D.
Chairman

Prepared by:
Susan A. Eichhorn
Town Clerk