

MEMORANDUM

September 30, 2009

**TO: Kenneth Glover, Chairman
and Members
Prince George's Hospital Authority**

FROM: Harold Weiss, M.D., F.A.C.P

SUBJECT: Personal Comments

Good Morning and thank you for the opportunity of addressing you today.

My name is Dr. Harold Weiss. I am an Internist and Pulmonary Disease specialist and I currently work at Prince George's Hospital Center as Physician Advisor to the Case Management Department. This July marked my 50th year living and working in the DC Metropolitan area, most of which was spent in the District of Columbia starting with my internship at the DC General Hospital, a point I will come back to later.


For 25 years I served as Chief of Clinical Services and Residency Program Director at Providence Hospital in Northeast DC. In 1993 I was elected to the Presidency of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia and during that period campaigned and testified at the DC City Council against the closure of DC General Hospital, to no avail. We witnessed the impact of this loss on the already overcrowded emergency rooms in the city and the need for the remaining hospitals to provide the needed care of thousands of the neediest patients in the District.

When I came to Prince George's Hospital Center in November 2005, it was not long before we heard the "rumblings" of possible closure of the hospital along with its sister institutions. I wondered if history would be repeating itself. Fortunately, the tide of public opinion prevailed and we feel confident that we will survive and continue to provide the much needed care to our community. However, survival alone should not be the only goal. We are truly blessed with a dedicated, compassionate staff who provide excellent quality of

medical care to some of the most difficult and complicated patients, not much different than those I encountered during my DC General days. But we face enormous challenges. Like all healthcare professionals, including myself, we have long wish lists including more nurses and technical staff, more and more updated medical equipment, and my own wish list, updated information technology to allow for total electronic medical records. We understand the financial constraints faced by administration and we celebrate every small "win" at our leadership meetings. But, as healthcare professionals, we always want more --- it's in our DNA!

We all hope that whoever the Authority selects as the new owner of the system sufficient resources are provided so that the hospital can take its place with the leading hospitals in the state and you all know who we compete with. I also urge the Authority to keep the system intact. In my daily activities with the case managers and social work staff, we find it increasingly difficult to "place" patients in much needed after-care facilities such as rehabilitation and nursing home centers. The centers unrelated to our system "pick and choose" those patients they are unwilling to accept. Those patients without or with inadequate insurance coverage have the lowest priority. Fortunately, our "sister" facilities, namely Gladys Spellman Specialty Hospital and Nursing Center, and Laurel Regional Acute Rehab Hospital, serve as our last hope. Without these facilities, patients would remain at the hospital for days and even months, and would be deprived of much needed services.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views. We all look forward to the result of your deliberations.



Harold Weiss, M.D., F.A.C.P.