

## **Prince George's Hospital Merger Talking Points**

### **Message:**

Effective starts:

- Will you help us ensure Prince George's residents get good health care?
- Will you show your support for access to full range health care in Prince George's county?

### **Longer message:**

Prince George's Hospital system is currently accepting bids from private health systems to take over the publicly-operated system. A change in ownership could negatively impact quality of care and result in a reduction of services available to patients. We want to ensure that residents continue to have access to a full range of services currently available.

### **Potential Questions:**

**Which hospitals would be affected?** Prince George's Hospital system includes Prince George's Hospital Center in Cheverly, Laurel Regional Hospital, the Bowie Health Campus and two nursing homes.

### **How could services be changed?**

- Indigent care- In order to lower costs and improve the system's troubled financial situation, a private hospital system may alter existing Prince George's County policies on free care for patients who are uninsured. That could mean restrictions on what services are provided to indigent patients and could change the rules about which patients are eligible for free care.
- A takeover by a faith-based provider could lead to the elimination of healthcare services relied upon by residents of Prince George's County. Many Catholic-affiliated hospital networks are run according to the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, which places specific restrictions on the types of services offered.

### **What type of services could be affected?**

Catholic-affiliated hospitals place restrictions on:

- 1) Counseling patients on the use of condoms to prevent the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections;
- 2) Access to family planning and abortion services and elective surgical sterilization procedures;
- 3) Providing emergency contraception;
- 4) Infertility treatments and some methods of testing for infertility;
- 5) Referrals to clinical trials that would require participants to take birth control;
- 6) Patients' ability to direct their end-of-life care.

**Are these services already being offered?** Yes.

**Who approves the bids?** A special Hospital Authority, who is appointed by members of the state and county government

**What will happen with the petition?** We will deliver all petitions to the Hospital Authority