

Ms. Mary O'Dowd, Acting Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
PO Box 360  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

Re: Opening of a Hospital in the Pascack Valley at Westwood, NJ

Dear Acting Commissioner O'Dowd:

I am writing this letter in support of opening a 128-bed, acute care hospital in Westwood. The Pascack Valley and citizens of northeastern Bergen County need this hospital. The former Pascack Valley Hospital, which closed in December of 2007, served the needs of over 200,000 residents of the Pascack and Northern Valleys. That hospital closed because of poor management, not because of a lack of need for quality medical care. A fully staffed, acute care facility with 128 beds is a must to properly serve the needs of the residents of northern Bergen County.

Over the past three years, residents of the Pascack and Northern Valleys, as well as the Volunteer Ambulance Corps that serve our communities, have experienced significantly longer travel time in their attempts to obtain medical care. Longer travel time means that ambulances are not placed back in service as quickly as they should be. This deprives other residents of a valuable and possibly a life saving service. It also adds to the amount of time required to obtain quality medical care.

I am asking that you rule in favor of quality and accessible health care for our region. The sooner HUMC North is opened, the sooner we will all have peace of mind and quality health care.

Thank you for helping to meet our future health care needs.

Sincerely,