

THOMAS V. MIKE MILLER, JR.
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
27th Legislative District



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

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County Executive Rushern Baker
County Council Chair Davis and Members of the Council
Senate Delegation Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Senate Delegation
House Delegation Chair Walker and Members of the House Delegation

Dear Prince George's County Colleagues:

I am writing to share with you a column about Prince George's County Regional Medical Center (PGRMC) written by a self-proclaimed Republican party activist. It is as offensive as it is wrong on the facts and the merits regarding PGRMC and the Anne Arundel Medical Center's application to provide open heart services. It also underscores some concerning activities that threaten the viability of the new PGRMC.

The column refers to the project as a "Taj Mahal" and a "mega-facility" while at the same time acknowledging the current Prince George's Hospital facility is "decrepit". In referring only to the dollar amount of the project, he also ignores that this is not a local community hospital but a regional academic medical center. State-designated to serve Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's and Southern Anne Arundel, as well as parts of Montgomery County, it is a Level II trauma center that currently treats over 3,300 trauma patients a year. This is exceeded in volume only by the Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

To ask the people of Prince George's County and all of Southern Maryland to accept something less than a medical center that can provide them with the same level and quality of health care as is available in other counties is unjustified and insulting. Prince George's County is the second-largest County in the State with over 900,000 people – almost 1/6 of the state's population.

Prince George's County has a population that is 38% larger than Anne Arundel and by 2020 will be 40% larger than Anne Arundel County. The fact that over 60% of Prince George's residents who currently require hospitalization have to seek that care at hospitals outside the County and often outside the State is intolerable. The effort by Anne Arundel Medical Center to duplicate services and draw from the University of Maryland Medical System's newly reinvigorated cardiac program at PGRMC will without a doubt threaten the viability of this project at this time.

Ironically, when Prince George's County wanted to build a casino at National Harbor to benefit from the tremendous jobs and economic development benefits, the County was required to wait 4 years before a facility could open so that the Anne Arundel and Baltimore City facilities could become established. We all reluctantly agreed to this delay. In this instance, we must also insist in the denial or delay of any duplication of new and competing services with the resulting siphoning off of patients to other regional hospitals prior to a shovel even being placed in the ground for the PGRMC. The facility and programs at the new PGRMC under the world-renowned University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) must be allowed to be built and permitted to mature for the financial viability of the entire project.

I would also note that the partisan drivel in this column combined with the Maryland Health Care Commission's selection of Robert Moffit as the hearing examiner for the Certificate of Need (CON) is concerning. Mr. Moffit was appointed to the Commission last year and is also a Republican who lives in Anne Arundel County. He is employed by the Heritage Foundation, a self-proclaimed conservative think tank. This summer, he demanded that the PGRMC be scaled down to be more like a community hospital in Montgomery County blatantly ignoring the vast differences between the two projects as noted above. All of this bureaucratic activity has further delayed the CON consideration by the Commission until November even though the application has been fully docketed at the Commission since April, 2015 and the law requires that a decision should have been made last September.

I am providing this information to you because it further underscores the need for unity and the urgency of the action that all of us must take to ensure that the people of Prince George's County and all of Southern Maryland have access to the high quality health care they deserve.

Locally, we must resolve the governance agreement with UMMS as soon as possible and I urge all of us to ensure that any delays going forward are not the result of action on the part of those of us who represent Prince George's County. We cannot play into the hands of those who have and will continue to seek to destroy this project. I believe that we stand at a precipice regarding the future of this project and these concerning activities appear to indicate that our two decade fight for a solution to the failing Prince George's hospital system may well not be over.

Sincerely,

The image shows a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.