

State of the Healthcare Industry In Prince George's County

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University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center

On November 30, 2017, elected officials, medical, civic, and business leaders, as well as other community stakeholders gathered to break ground on the new University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center to be built in Largo on a 26-acre site adjacent to the Arena Drive exit off of Interstate 495.

The \$543 million, 600,000 square-foot facility is expected to open in 2021 with an 11-level main patient care tower, two roof-top helipads, 205 private inpatient rooms, a 20-bed adult observation/short stay treatment area, a 45-bay Emergency Department, eight operating rooms, and a 15-bed specialty pediatric hospital operated by Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (co-owned by the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine). The project is also slated to include an ambulatory care center and outpatient clinical programs.

The new medical center will serve as the centerpiece of the new regional health care system's provision of services to residents of Prince George's County and Southern Maryland



*Neil J. Moore, MBA, MPH, MPA
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Obamacare Works for Prince George's County

The new tax cut legislation will gouge out key components of the Affordable Care Act that have greatly benefited Prince George's County. The ACA was an important legacy of the Obama administration and has become known as Obamacare. It made affordable health insurance more widely available and resulted in the most significant reduction in the number of uninsured Americans since the creation of Medicare 50 years ago. Efforts since then to tweak coverage levels had not moved the national uninsured rate from about 40 million people. Obamacare cut that number in half in just six years. The ACA resulted in the highest rates of insured Americans ever. The people of Prince George's County benefited greatly from this law. In 2010, almost 20% of our residents, just about 200,000 people, were without health insurance. Today, that problem has been reduced to just 11% of our growing population. The improvement has been laudable, but five percent of our children still lack insurance and our rates of uninsured are still higher than in other nearby jurisdictions. Efforts to turn back the benefits of the ACA will severely inhibit our progress toward improving health in this county. Families with health insurance enjoy more economic security and better mental health. Without insurance, families live in constant uncertainty as to what to do about managing their health. They often rely on a few physicians and clinics, but mostly on hospital emergency rooms when they are sick; often ignoring their chronic illnesses.

Having more people properly insured has advantages for the greater community. More insurance allows providers to better manage their costs and revenues and provide more resources to patients so they can take control of their own care. It helps to fund improvements in our local health facilities and services and create more well-paying health care jobs. More insurance coverage helps to improve lives and fund a cycle of improvement that will give our residents more high quality care choices in our community. Better choices lead to consuming more services in our county and that builds our local economy. Prince George's County has long suffered from health status measures that suggest we are less healthy than the rest of Maryland. For example, we tend to rank higher in our rates of chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, are more overweight, and have more under-weight infant births. In recent years, these issues are being addressed by more coordinated strategies for "population health improvement" which have benefited from more people having health insurance.

The recent tax cut legislation has eliminated one of the key components of Obamacare: the individual mandate requiring everyone to buy health insurance. This, and the earlier removal of the requirement for standard preventive services benefits, has damaged the ACA's ability to stabilize the insurance market and lower premium costs for all. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has projected that this alone will drive up insurance premiums 10% in the first year, and create an additional 4 million uninsured, going to 13 million by 2027. That could mean that Prince George's County would be back to 150,000 uninsured in ten years. County Council had earlier this year, unanimously passed a resolution "urging the Maryland Congressional Delegation, Maryland General Assembly and all Prince Georgians to oppose and resist any weakening of the protections provided by the ACA." Now Governor Hogan has said he will propose that the General Assembly use any savings from the federal tax cut legislation to keep Marylanders whole. This must also include specific action to keep enforcing the individual mandate in Maryland to require everyone to have health insurance. Prince Georgians are healthier and more economically secure when more of us have insurance. Encourage your representatives to keep Obamacare protections in place.

John A. O'Brien, MHA, is a former president of Prince George's Hospital Center, now retired. He received his BA from Penn State University and his masters at the University of Minnesota. John has enjoyed a 40-year career in healthcare administration. A resident of Hyattsville, he now assists community leaders who are developing health services in the county, writing for history journals, and socializing with five grandsons.

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The State of Cancer Care in Prince George's County

There is a real lack of services for people affected by cancer in Prince George's County. Hope Connections for Cancer Support helps people with cancer and their loved ones deal with the emotional and physical impact of cancer through professionally facilitated programs of emotional support, education, wellness and hope. Hope Connections has been providing free support groups, mind/body programs and educational workshops in Bethesda since 2007. When looking to expand in 2016, the choice was clear that we needed to open a facility in Prince George's County.

Our decision to add a facility in Prince George's County was based upon the knowledge that the County is one of the most under-served when it comes to cancer care (this applies to clinical or hospital care as well as emotional and physical support). The County has identified significant disparities in cancer survival for its African American population, and we strive to improve these outcomes. Survival rates for the Caucasian population in Prince George's County are quite close to State of Maryland mortality targets while rates for African Americans are well above these targets in all cases (30.6 per 100,000 breast cancer survival, 19.8 per 100,000 colorectal cancer survival, and 43.2 per 100,000 for prostate cancer). Better use of preventive and clinical care would help to redress these disparities. However, surveys of African Americans reveal three key barriers to increased use of these services. They are:

- Convenience of services
- Lack of knowledge about existence and benefits of services due to a culture of silence within the community.
- Distrust of the medical profession

Wrap-around support and educational services help break through these barriers, as they empower people with cancer and their loved ones to make optimal use of treatment opportunities. Some health facilities offer these services onsite along with clinical care. However, this is not a viable solution in Prince George's County because the lack of hospitals and oncology services within the County drive residents to seek clinical care outside of the County. Therefore, educational and psychosocial services must be separated from clinical care in order to be convenient. This will improve the quality of life and clinical outcomes for people undergoing cancer treatment and their loved ones and will reduce race related disease outcome disparities for African Americans in Prince George's County.

Real progress however, has been made in the last year in providing cancer care to residents of the County. Doctors Community Hospital has opened its Center for Comprehensive Breast Care, its infusion center treats patients with many types of cancer and it offers free mammography, colon and prostate cancer screenings. With the ground-breaking on the new University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center, soon people with cancer and their loved ones will be able to find the medical, physical and psychosocial help they need without having to leave the County.

Paula Rothenberg
President & CEO, Hope Connections for Cancer Support



Taking Care of Our Community Greater Baden Medical Services, Inc.

Few would have imagined in 1972 that a small part-time clinic established in a repurposed school building to meet the unmet health care needs of a tobacco farming community in Baden, Maryland would grow to become a thriving Federally Qualified Health Center and patient centered medical home to over 17,000 unduplicated men, women, and children. Over the years, Greater Baden Medical Services, often called GBMS by its over 150 employees delivers care in 7 locations in Prince George's, Charles and St. Mary's counties. Expanding its hours of operation to include evenings and weekends, GBMS' services are a part of an integrated health care delivery system in Prince George's with 4 clinical sites and 3 WIC locations in Brandywine, Capitol Heights and Oxon Hill. Initially known for providing high quality primary and preventive care, GBMS has added exceptional pediatric, behavior health, substance related treatment, women's health and comprehensive HIV/AIDS services to its menu. In July of 2017, the organization celebrated the opening of its second dental suite in the County, serving both children and adults. A cost-effective venue for care and a valuable resource for Emergency Room diversion, GBMS recognizes its strength is largely dependent upon collaboration with many partners in the government, hospital, non-profit, specialty care, philanthropic and business communities.

Led by CEO Colenthia Malloy, the Executive Team and a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of active patients, business, church, government and health care leaders, the organization works strategically to manage GBMS' growing pains while giving keen focus to maintaining the high level of health outcomes and ensuring a winning patient experience. "We are proud to provide the highest level of care to individuals and families whether they have insurance or are uninsured. We are mission driven and committed to excellence."

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, and additional primary care providers drawn to the county, Greater Baden continues to be a key safety net provider in the community. Taking disease prevention and management information to venues including barbershops, laundry mats, churches, town halls, and businesses, the trained cadre of outreach workers demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the promotion of health literacy by teaching residents the difference between preventative care, primary care, urgent and emergent care. A new and vital partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Health's Healthy Futures program added over a dozen students to the outreach efforts allowing an expanded focus on healthy eating, WIC, oral health including dental sealants, physical activity, and promotion of the GBMS patient portal. GBMS offers services to patients for whom English is a second language both in the health centers and in the community.

We have rebranded, developed a user friendly / mobile friendly website & strive to deliver a patient experience worthy of comments shared in the words of a GBMS' patient:

Dear GBMS,

I was diagnosed HIV positive 19 years ago. Greater Baden Medical Services has been for 17 years and continues to be a place I can boast about often to whomever may hear or is willing to listen. I interact with other HIV positive people, both men and women. I receive great service from exceptional people at Greater Baden. I make sure I communicate with others every time I get the chance and encourage them to come to Greater Baden to get what they deserve. I really feel like I receive the very best of care and wild horses couldn't drag me away from what I have been receiving for over 17 years. It is my pleasure to compose and forward this letter to you. Trust me, my words cannot do my true feelings the proper justice.

*Mr. Brooks
GBMS Patient*

*Melony G. Griffith, MSW
Vice President of External Affairs & Development, Greater Baden Medical Service, Inc.*

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