

I am proud of OCH and what it means to this community. The Board of Supervisors has many responsibilities and obligations to its citizens, including healthcare. We do not take such responsibilities lightly regardless of where we stand on the issues. However, the question seems simple: do we want the status quo or the possibility for greater healthcare services in our community?

This is not a knock on the current or past leaders of OCH. The reality is that as a County-owned hospital, there are limited funds to expand and enhance healthcare. The lack of necessary capital, coupled with the extreme challenges facing healthcare and the uncertainty of healthcare laws and regulations, raises the issue of whether a County needs to be in the business of owning a stand-alone hospital. This RFP process has since the beginning and will continue to be about fulfilling our responsibilities to preserve and enhance our healthcare in Oktibbeha County and exploring the possibilities of securing the best healthcare for decades to come.

No matter what our decision on Nov. 7th, our hospital will continue to provide services, our employees will be working and our citizens in need of free or charity services will have care. Free or charity care will continue to be available for those in need. Both Baptist Health System and North MS. are experienced, well-funded and proven healthcare providers. As non-profit organizations, both have demonstrated records of investing strongly in the communities they serve which is ultimately the strongest commitment we can give our employees in these uncertain times. Both respondents will need and want to retain staff. Both respondents will need and want to be involved in and be a part of our community. Both have committed to involving physicians, hospital employees, administration and community leaders in the future of OCH's operations.

Whether or not OCH is ultimately sold, changes will, of course, occur. NEEDED CHANGE. Our hospital is not performing well enough to allow us to invest at a level that will make and keep us competitive with much larger systems in the future without continued and perhaps additional tax support. The County now provides about \$1.9 million a year in support to the Hospital and Ambulance Services. As required by Mississippi law, the RFP and the bond documents, the County and OCH's bond obligations will be satisfied with proceeds from the sale and at the sale closing your taxes will be reduced by the same \$1.9 million a year.

Additionally, the BOS is committed to maintaining the net proceeds to the County of a sale in an investment trust for the long term benefit of the County, only interest from this trust will be used. The economic benefits of a possible sale are still to be determined, but do not go away. Economic benefits possibly increases substantially as has happened for other communities in our region.

Finally, the BOS has not yet made a final decision and cannot until the people vote on Nov. 7th. If a sale is approved, the rest of the RFP process will proceed by conducting the Board's own due diligence of the respondents and their proposals and a decision would be made to retain or sell the hospital.

Thank you.