



HUNTSVILLE HOSPITAL

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August 2009

Dear Community Friend,

It's clear that the national debate on healthcare reform has struck a nerve with millions of Americans. The proposal being considered in Washington has produced extreme opinions all over the country. Huntsville Hospital was the site for a town hall meeting recently for U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions. Hundreds of people attended the "community listening forum" and by and large they expressed a strong opinion that although the current healthcare system has its flaws, a comprehensive overhaul that puts it under the federal government's control is not the answer.

As the major provider of care in this region, we also believe that there are many improvements that need to be made in healthcare. Nonetheless, we realize that our healthcare system is far too complicated to quickly approve the massive changes that are being considered by Congress today. Whatever is done should be the result of a great deal of study and input from a variety of groups, including healthcare providers, payers and citizens. A blue-ribbon panel, insulated from politics, would give the best opportunity to recommend and oversee any successful reform of the healthcare system.

Regardless of any action from Congress, healthcare continues to reform itself. The drive toward higher quality and efficiency is occurring due to internal forces and external market pressures as well. One of these positive developments is the integration of healthcare providers who have previously worked independently, specifically hospitals and physicians. Huntsville Hospital recently acquired The Heart Center for this very reason. As the leading cardiac hospital in the region, it became clear that we needed to be working much more closely with the largest group of cardiologists in the region. As one team, we can now take the next steps in improving cardiac care for people throughout the Tennessee Valley. Across the nation the best cardiac centers have adopted this integrated model—Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Duke, and Emory. Our vision is for Huntsville Hospital to be named among the best in cardiac care.

We are also proud that our efforts in providing quality care were recently singled out by the American Heart & Stroke Association. The organization's Get with the Guidelines program recognized hospitals that implement best practice protocols in the treatment of patients with coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure and stroke. Huntsville Hospital earned "gold medal" status for achievement in each area for multiple years. Only 40 hospitals in the country were so honored and noted in a recent issue of U.S. News & World Report.

The plans for our Madison Hospital are nearing completion, including the final building design which will be made public soon. We have received valuable input from our Madison Hospital Advisory Council as well as from our Physicians Advisory Council. Both of these groups have been meeting for several months. An official groundbreaking will be scheduled for December and will be widely publicized should you want to attend.

Lastly, I am pleased to report that Huntsville Hospital ended the fiscal year on June 30th in a positive financial position. This came despite one of the most difficult years in several decades in our nation. I want to thank our employees for a lot of hard work and sacrifice in helping us remain a strong hospital. We also appreciate the support of our friends through the Huntsville Hospital Foundation. Together, all of us have much to be proud of in our community hospital. We share that credit with you and look forward to continuing our service to you and your family.

Sincerely,

David S. Spillers, CEO