

**SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW STATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
IN TUSCOLA COUNTY TO REPLACE THE CURRENT CARO CENTER FACILITY**

At a regular meeting of the Frankenmuth Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors on June 20, 2019, the members voted (unanimously) to support this resolution. The motion was made by Vickie Schmitzer and seconded by Joe Cramer.

Present at the meeting were: Mike Grossi, Joe Cramer, Mike Fassezke, Tamara Tsulaia, Beth Reindel, Chris Rittmueller, Vickie Schmitzer, Terry Weiss, Jamie Furbush and Abby Curtis

WHEREAS, Since the 1990's, the number of state psychiatric beds in Michigan decreased by nearly 50%, yet the needs of persons with acute psychosis continue, often evidenced through emergency room visits, jail sentences and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Emergency service providers including law enforcement personnel struggle with meeting the growing demands on their resources and facilities by assisting those in acute psychiatric crisis; and

WHEREAS, The State Legislature responded to this crisis providing \$115 million in state building authority financed construction funds for a new state psychiatric hospital to be built on the grounds of the current Caro Center as signed into law through Public Act 107 of 2017; and

WHEREAS, The State Administrative Board approved a \$5.4 million a design contract for a new, 200-bed, regional state psychiatric hospital on the site of the existing Caro Center, increasing the number of beds to 350; and a State-sponsored ground breaking event was held in 2018, foretelling the opening of the new facility by 2021 replacing the aging Caro facility; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the expense of any funds, State Administrators had vetted the site as acceptable as 70% of current employees travel less than 30 miles to work; the site's central location makes it accessible to state highways for patient transportation to area medical providers and for family visits; that 80% of current patients come from Genesee, Oakland and Macomb Counties, just to the south of Tuscola County and within an average 90 minute drive or less; the 600-acre site is already state-owned and infrastructure is already in place; and, Tuscola County engineers determined the on-site water system can be economically upgraded to improve service to the new hospital; and

WHEREAS, More than \$3 million in taxpayer funds have already been spent in preparation for construction at the Caro site; and

WHEREAS, In March 2019, Construction was halted on the facility and the State contracted with a private consulting firm, at the cost of \$277,000, to re-assess the location of the new state psychiatric facility, potentially delaying the availability of improved psychiatric services including provision of new beds and the replacement of the aging Caro facility by another 2-4 years; and

WHEREAS, The facility is vital for this entire region of Michigan, including the City of Frankenmuth, as the existing facility infuses an estimated \$54 million annually into the regional economy while directly employing 350 people and indirectly employing another 400 people; and, Relocation of the facility would have devastating negative repercussions to businesses, schools and families living in communities throughout this region of the state;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Frankenmuth Economic Development Corporation urges Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon, and members of the State Legislature, in response to a critical shortage of inpatient state psychiatric beds, to continue with the renovation of the existing Caro center and construction of a new 200-bed, state psychiatric hospital on the grounds of the current Caro Center located in Tuscola County, as and valued and economic option for quality, accessible services to patients and their families, and to the taxpayers of Michigan; all this, preventing devastating impact to businesses, schools employees and families living in communities throughout this region of the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon, State Senator Kevin Daley, and State Representative Phil Green and Tuscola County administrators.

Submitted by: Sheila Stamiris, Executive Director
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