



LEE COUNTY HOSPITAL AUTHORITY BOARD RECEIVES EXTENSION TO OPEN LEE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

Pennington Gap, VA (August 13, 2018): Lee County Hospital Authority Board Chairman, Ronnie Montgomery announced that effective August 13, the VA Dept of Health extended the Certificate of Public Need (COPN) to open Lee County Medical Center in Pennington Gap, VA. The Board unanimously approved the filing for the extension.

“Weather, equipment delivery, infrastructure needs & state requirements impacted the planned opening in July 2018,” said Howard Elliott, who is one of two Hospital Authority Commissioners that serves on the joint committee with Americore Health working on the initiative. The building is over 30 years old, has been closed for 4 years, and in need of repair. The new target opening date is tentatively November/December 2018.

“We will continue to invest financially to ensure residents have access to essential health care,” says Grant White, CEO of Americore Health, the parent company that acquired the hospital in November 2017.

Jeanette Filpi, CEO, is leading the charge to open the 25-bed rural hospital. Planned services include a 24/7/365 Emergency Room, Radiology, Surgical & Lab Services. “Our goal is to provide access to essential health care services & revitalize our community,” says Filpi. An estimated 50-75 employees are expected to be hired, and planned future services include telehealth and expanded specialty services.

“The community has been tremendously supportive,” says Filpi. Over 125 residents attended the Lee County Medical Center Community Forum at Lee Theatre on Sat. May 5, 2018 and almost 300 have signed up to receive email notices. Filpi says her team is committed to keeping the community informed through multiple channels:

- Regular updates can be found on Facebook at the Lee County Hospital Authority at: <https://www.facebook.com/LeeCountyHospitalAuthority>
- LCMC will continue to provide monthly updates via its website at www.leecountyhealth.com where interested parties are encouraged to share their email to receive e-notifications
- Direct mail bi-monthly to those that opted to give a post address
- Media release to local media outlets

Commissioner Diana Pope who is the other Commissioner on the joint committee, says she has been impressed with the Americore Health team’s commitment and efforts to get the hospital re-opened. “Much has been accomplished in a short period of time,” says Pope. Adds Filpi, “Setting realistic expectations - It takes 12-18 months to open a hospital. The goal is to open with a full-service hospital.”

In the request to extend the COPN, the Hospital Authority Board demonstrated that Rural Hospitals are necessary for economic vitality, community access to healthcare and patient safety. "There is an alarming trend of rural hospital closures in America," says new Hospital Authority Commissioner, Dr. Jill Couch. According to the National Rural Health Association, 283 closed since 2010. "Hospital closures are devastating to communities," says Couch. "Rural hospitals are needed for basic & urgent care - otherwise residents drive miles and hours for care."

Wellmont Health System closed Lee Regional Medical Center in October 2013.

About the Lee County Hospital Authority

The Board of Supervisors of Lee County created the Lee County Hospital Authority on April 15, 2014. After successfully obtaining a Certificate of Public Need and purchasing the former Lee Regional Medical Center building from its previous owner, the Authority chose Americore Health, LLC, as its partner in re-opening a hospital in Lee County.

About Americore Health, LLC

Americore Health is a new hospital management, investment and acquisition company dedicated to the revitalization of rural healthcare.

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