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March 9, 2022

Senator George C. Edwards
Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 978 – Support

Dear Senator Edwards:

I serve as the County Attorney for Garrett County, Maryland, and am writing on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County (the “County”) to express support for Senate Bill 978.

As a result of the foresight and generosity of the late George W. Loar, the County owns the Garrett County Memorial Hospital (the “Hospital”). The County’s ownership of the real property, and ownership and management of the operating assets of the Hospital by the Board of Governors of the Hospital (the “Board”), is set forth in Chapter 36 of Garrett County Code which appears as Article 12 of the Public Local Laws of Maryland. Senate Bill 978, as proposed, seeks to clarify the authority of the Board and the County to enter into transactions, including the lease of the Hospital and its operation (the “Lease”), to GRMC, Inc. (“GRMC”), a Maryland nonprofit corporation which is a new operating entity formed as a wholly-owned subsidiary of West Virginia United Health System, Inc. (“WVUHS”).

The Board and the County have been engaged in a process of long-term strategic planning to ensure the continued financial and operational stability of the Hospital and have determined that it is in the best interest of the County, its residents, and the residents of the surrounding area, to enter into and consummate the transactions and the Lease. The Lease requires important commitments from WVUHS to support and make investments in the Hospital and positions the Hospital so that it may maintain its stability in an evolving rural healthcare landscape. The parties have determined that consummation of the Lease will allow the Hospital to utilize WVUHS’s size, infrastructure, and operational efficiencies for the benefit of the County, its residents, and the surrounding communities.

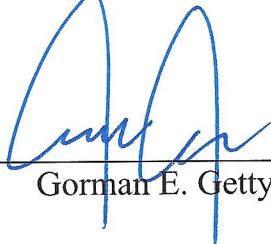
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The Board and the County have determined that this legislation is necessary to proceed with consummation of the Lease. If Senate Bill 978 does not become law in a form that definitively authorizes the Board to consummate the Lease during the current legislative session, the Lease will not be consummated, and the transaction would likely be delayed for a year or more until authorizing legislation could be passed. We are asking for the Committee and the Legislature's support to avoid any delay in the efforts of the County and the Board to secure the future of high-quality health care in Garrett County.

I hope that the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee will support Senate Bill 978. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

GORMAN E. GETTY, III, P.A.

By  _____
Gorman E. Getty, III

GEG/vas