



Board of Commissioners

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COMMISSIONERS

January 27, 2021

Arne Mortensen
District 1

Dennis P. Weber
District 2

Joe Gardner
District 3

Representative Steve Tharinger
Olympia Office
314 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

CLERK OF THE BOARD

Tiffany Ostreim

Re: Cowlitz County support for Community Home Health & Hospice's project to renovate its Longview Hospice Care Center

Dear: Representative Tharinger

The Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners appreciate the opportunity to write to you with our strong support for Community Home Health & Hospice's (Community) project to renovate its Longview Hospice Care Center. Community is reinvesting in Cowlitz County's only inpatient hospice facility to support the growing senior population and meet advancements in medical care, security, technology and infection control.

When Community built the Longview Hospice Care Center in 1984, it was Washington State's first hospice care center and the 26th in the nation. It was expanded from 4 beds to 12 beds in 1997 and has not been updated for nearly a quarter of a century. In February 2020, Community received results of a feasibility study proposing construction of an all-new facility at a cost of \$6 million. The study indicated potential \$5 million in support including up to \$1.5 million from the state through a member-sponsored request and the Building Communities Fund.

COVID hit, and afforded an opportunity to take a step back, revisit the scope of the project and consider using existing spaces more efficiently. Its reengineered plan calls for a renovation of the existing center as a modernized hospice campus including a 46% increase in spaces devoted to patients and families at an estimated cost of \$4.2 million—a 30% decrease from the original \$6 million proposal. This renovation is possible by transferring 3900 square feet of space in the existing building currently used for administrative functions to an already-owned building across the alley; freeing the space to be remodeled and devoted to bigger spaces for families and patients. Community is confident that administrative staff can be very successful sharing spaces based on their 2020 pandemic operations.

Community recently secured a \$1 million commitment from a private donor that will provide a new name for the renovated facility and a solid launch to its capital campaign. It is seeking \$1.5 million from the state to leverage this leadership philanthropy and get to \$2.5 million in support. Community's inpatient hospice facility has served generations of families since 1984 and it knows how to deliver healthcare our citizens need.

This project is renovation-ready, COVID-prepared, efficient and cost effective. The plan that Community has proposed will modernize the Longview Hospice Care Center and support this level of care for decades to come. For these reasons, we encourage the Washington State Legislature to approve Community's \$1.5 million member request.

Sincerely,

**Board of County Commissioners
of Cowlitz County, Washington**



Joe Gardner, Chairman



Dennis P. Weber, Commissioner



Arne Mortensen, Commissioner

cc:
Senator John Braun
Senator Jeff Wilson
Representative Peter Abbarno
Representative Joel McEntire
Representative Ed Orcutt
Representative Jim Walsh