

July 21, 2003

The Honorable Lynn O'Malley Taylor  
Marin County Superior Court  
P O Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Re: Response to Civil Grand Jury Report on a Hospital-Based Heliport in Marin County

Dear Judge Taylor:

I am writing to comment on the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's June 13, 2003, Report on the Hospital-Based Heliport. We are pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this report, and commend the Grand Jury for its effort in studying this important community issue.

Marin General Hospital (MGH) continues to support the construction of a heliport at or near a hospital in Marin County.

Our belief is that the heliport would best serve the community if located at the hospital with the highest level Trauma Center designation.

If the County Board of Supervisors agrees with the American College of Surgeons that MGH should be upgraded to a Level II Trauma Center – or if the decision is made to continue with a Level III with Neurosurgery Coverage at MGH – then it makes sense that the heliport be located on or near the MGH campus.

MGH fully understands and appreciates that there is a planning and approval process necessary in order to proceed with heliport approval by the Board of Supervisors. Community input is important, and planning needs to consider neighborhood, environmental, and safety factors.

Our understanding is that the following steps need to occur in order for a heliport to be approved by the Board of Supervisors: a pre-application to the County by MGH, an application to the County by MGH to amend our Master Plan, scoping of the environmental review by the County and according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the County to select an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consultant (or negative declaration), and of the EIR by the County. MGH, as the applicant, would pay for the EIR, which would be independently managed by the County.

MGH, like the Grand Jury, is committed to doing what we can to move this important project forward. Therefore, as an immediate next step, we plan to submit the pre-application to the County. As the project proceeds, we will do what we can to facilitate a speedy, yet appropriate planning process.

The Marin Healthcare District Board historically and is currently very supportive of a heliport, and we will work with it as appropriate to further the project.

Thank you again for your continued interest in this issue. I believe we can all agree that the presence of a heliport at or near a hospital in Marin would enhance the level of trauma services available to our residents.

Sincerely,

Margaret Sabin  
CEO

Attachment: Response To Grand Jury Report Form

Cc: Larry Meredith, Director  
Marin County Health & Human Services