

Frequently Asked Questions: The Porter Legacy Project and the Future of Healthcare in our Community

Introduction: We have now held five employee forums, two community forums and two medical staff forums (more to come!)....and here are some of the frequently asked questions we have heard and our responses to those questions. We hope this information is helpful to those who have not been able to attend a forum so far, and we hope everyone will attend one of the upcoming forums later this summer—

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

- Why is Porter Medical Center attractive to potential partners?

Porter Medical Center provides quality patient and resident care to the people of our region and has a dedicated staff and an outstanding network of primary and specialty care practices, as well as a skilled nursing facility with a five star quality rating. In the future world of population health and our understanding of our state's vision of payment reform, the "attributed lives" represented within our Addison County service area is seen as another significant resource and advantage for building an integrated health delivery system in the future.

- What do we want to "get" from a partner? What is in it for Porter?

The short answer is that from a clinical perspective we want to do everything we are doing now....and more...through better clinical integration and access to specialty care services here in our community that are not now available. Also, access to capital from a larger and stronger partner means we can invest in new facilities and a new EHR system that will further enhance our ability to serve our community and keep Porter growing and strong for the future.

- What is the timeline for this decision?

We anticipate that within the new few months our board will vote to either remain independent or formally explore a specific proposal from a potential partner. It is important to stay informed and participate in the various forums and surveys now being offered so that your voice can be heard.

- Who makes the final decision?

The PMC Board of Directors is responsible for making the final decision as to whether or not to partner and with whom. However, the board is interested in all perspectives and information to help them come to the very best decision for Porter and our community. They want to hear from you.

- Is this happening just because of finances? Why now?

As indicated above, the opportunity to introduce more (and more specialized) medical services to our community is a core rationale for this exploration, as well as stabilizing our finances and gaining access to significant new capital resources to initiate projects like a new, modern

medical office building, new integrated electronic health record system, etc.....it is truly about meeting the needs of our community by being a stronger and better organization.

- Does this impact any of Porter's core services?

If we choose to partner, we do not anticipate any changes to our core patient care services for the foreseeable future. There are no guarantees in health care (or in life), but our goal is to build upon what we have, not diminish it.

- How is input from physicians, employees and community getting to the board?

We have had multiple forums, written communications and an online survey posted on our Intranet site. We have a Physician Advisory Committee, a Community Advisory Committee and a special sub-committee of the Porter board all working hard to connect and communicate with our PMC community. All of the feedback from these groups is being recorded and will be provided to the board as part of their decision making process.

- Who are we talking to in terms of partnership?

We have been advised by our consultants to not name the organizations we are currently talking with to ensure that we get the very best proposal from each of them. If partnership is the decision, more details and specific information will be shared as soon as our board decides which partner is offering the best proposal for Porter.

- If we partner, would we lose our critical access hospital designation?

No we would not.

- Will we lose our identity...our culture as an organization if we partner?

Based on our conversations with potential partners and our information gathering from other similar hospitals which have taken this path before us, we feel confident that we will be able to maintain and build upon the strengths and attributes of Porter. That is an important goal we all share.

- We haven't seen a vision or path forward for autonomy – can we do this alone?

We are now in the process of sharing some very specific financial modeling that will clearly illustrate what the path forward would look like in both an "independent" model and a partner model. We hope everyone will come to these future sessions and learn more.

- What about spinning off the nursing home as a strategy to improve finances?

Helen Porter is a critical component of our mission and to meeting the health care needs of this community through an integrated system. Nobody can predict the future, but in our conversations with potential partners we have clearly communicated that Helen Porter is a core service that we believe must continue to exist and serve our community.

- What about local Governance if we partner?

In order to secure additional clinical and financial resources, there is no doubt that a partnership would involve some loss of local (governance) control. As we move forward with this process and those items are better defined, this will be a key topic for our future presentations. Please come and learn!

- What about our jobs, benefits and existing contracts if we partner? Will they change?

Again, there are no guarantees with regard to jobs or benefits in either an independent or partnering scenario...but if we do move forward with partnering, we do not anticipate any changes to jobs, benefits or contracts in the foreseeable future. More specific information about provider contracts will be shared in our upcoming provider forums.

- Can we get out of it (partnership) if we don't like it after a few years?

If Porter moves forward with a partnership that brings to our organization significant financial resources and benefits (like a new medical office building and new EHR), that level of partnership would not be simple to dissolve without reimbursing the larger organization for these significant investments in our community.

- How are we (employees, providers, community) going to be engaged in this process going forward?

Through the Provider Advisory Committee and the Community Advisory Committee, as well as via direct forums with our providers, community and staff; we will continue to communicate and reach out for your ideas, questions and concerns over the next few months. We want this to be an inclusive and transparent communications process and your voice is important to us. Please be engaged and involved.