

Health Policy, Rep. Mike Callton, Chair
DATE: Tuesday, March 1, 2016 TIME: 9:00 AM
PLACE: Room 519, House Office Building, Lansing, MI

From: Mark John Hunter 614 S. 8th Avenue Alpena, MI 49707 989-356-3171 ohio@core.com

"No decision has been made," is one of those things, that when heard from a government official, we must take with a grain of salt. Alpena County Board of Commissioners used that phrase when the question of whether or not the public would be given a vote on the "proposed transfer" of Alpena Regional Medical Center to MidMichigan Health.

At each stage the County Chairman has moved forward, approving one step after another of the "proposed transfer." At the Granum Theater meeting the commissioners approved a resolution to support state legislation for the transfer, which does NOT include a vote of the public. Several times, I have let the commissioners know that they needed a law including the option of a public vote passed, so they would have the choice of letting the public vote. That is based on a state attorney general's opinion. One commissioner replied to me that, "it is only an opinion."

The County Chair at the February board meeting said, that until the proposed legislation is passed by both chambers of the legislature and signed by Gov. Snyder, the board cannot take action, because a deal could be deemed illegal until the new law is in place. I think the chair understands what he is doing. I have many issues with this proposed transfer, but cannot get answers from the officials involved.

At the February meeting, the commissioners passed a resolution, not reported by the Alpena News, whose title is, "Resolution Approving Second Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of Alpena Regional Medical Center to Permit the Alpena Regional Medical Center to become Affiliated with MidMichigan Health." I question the use of the word "affiliate," since they are changing ownership to MidMichigan, not merely affiliating.

Remember, no decision on whether we get to vote has been made. I am concerned about the cost to patients increasing due to the concentration of hospitals in systems in our state.

What I see is the usual manipulation of the public. It is a done deal, and the public gets no vote, that was clear after Wednesday afternoon's meeting; UNLESS you and other citizens demand that we be given a vote. The commissioners are ready to let ARMC pass on to the uncertain future of having MidMichigan own it.

I oppose the bill for the reasons above; but also there is great difficulty in getting answers and getting straight answers to questions about the "proposed" transfer.

I cannot get the answers I want, and so I am all the more suspect in the push to give away Alpena Regional Medical Center. Who wants to deal with a medical system that will not answer your questions?

1. I ask that the Health Policy Committee vote no on this bill, and not recommend it for passage. Alpena Regional Medical Center can do well on its own, as long as it gets new local leadership, instead of the disastrous leadership we have had under Karmon Bjella.

2. If the Health Policy Committee votes to recommend the bill for passage, then I ask that a provision be added allowing the Alpena County Commissioners, or in the case of other counties, their commissioners to have a vote of the people on whether to transfer the hospital. I would prefer that such a vote be required, but even a provision allowing but not requiring a vote would be better than none. See Michigan Attorney General Opinion No. 6411.

3. This hearing should have been held in Alpena, and the community should have been given notice. As it is only by diligence did we find out about the hearing. There should have been an official notice printed in the local newspaper a month ahead of time, with a reminder one week before the hearing.

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