

**Tennessee Health Services and Development Agency
Public Hearing
East Tennessee Healthcare Holdings, Inc.
CN1605-021
August 5, 2016**

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

**Mark Farber, Deputy Director
Jim Christoffersen, General Counsel**

ATTENDEES PRESENT

Support

Allison Rogers
Angela Hageman
Bob Pack
Clem Wilkes
Hank Car
Jennifer Miller
Kathleen Jones
Paul Triverte
Rhonda Coffey
Rickie Carter
Taylor Hamilton
Teresa Hicks
Teresa Kidd
Lindy White

Opposition

Amanda Gunther
Angela Hageman
Ashley Held
Bart Walker
Becky Sutton
Beverly Lonegrove
Bill Burke
Bob McCloud
Bob Miller
Boyd Wallace
Brandon Harold
Bryan Davenport
Carla Gass
Carleen Claybaker
Carolyn Burgess
Chandler Rowan
Janet Snyder
Janice Adams

Opposition Continued

Charlie Buckingham
Cindy Randall
Clarence Mabe
Connor Rowan
Cookie Mabe
Dallas Crum
Daniel Wagner
Danny Sells
Darrell Freeman
Darren Adams
David McDan
Debbie Wyse
Deborah Wagner
Diane Ramunno
Donald Hall
Ed Graybeal
Ed Johnston
Ed Meyers
Ed Ritsko
Ellen Buckingham
Eric Henley
Evelyn Ferguson
Freda Byers
Gary Vicars
Gretchen Cline
Hillary Lambert
Howard Darnell
Hunter Adams
Jack Mosier
Jackson Randal
James Cline
Jan Ford
Janet Gray
Richard Bailey

Janice Shelton
Janis Burke
Jaret Gunther
Jason Utsman
Jeanne Keebler
Jeff Rhoton
Jerry Rose
Jim Byers
Joanna Horne
Joe Horne
John Baker
John Champion
John Mabe
John Thrailkill
Johnny Gray
Joyce Stiltner
Judy Freeman
Karen Smail
Keia Keeling
Keith Loy
Kellie Ritsko
Kent Harris
Kerry Phipps
Kim Jamerson
Kim Loveless
Kim Phipps
Larry Buckingham
Linda Coffman
Linda Hall
Linda McCracken
Lorenzo Ramunno, Esq.
Lori Walker
Luanna Wheelock
Makayla Huggins
Margie Hall
Mark Blevins
Matthew Lambert
Micah Van Huss
Michael Gass
Michael Snyder
Mike Ford
Pamela Davis
Paul Onks
Penny Wallace
Phil Wheelock
Phil Sells
Phillip Rowan

Richard Buckingham
Rick Wagner
Ruth Banner
Ruth Mabe
Sally Hicks
Samuel Plucker
Sandra Salts
Sandra Shell
Scott Mays
Sherman Salts
Shirley Tyree
Steve Wyse
Taylor Hamilton
Teresa Vicars
Thomas Schacht
Thomas Tilton
TJ Brackins
Tom Jennings
Tom Stiltner
Virginia Mosier
Wendy Fleenor
William Harold
Wrightly Johnson

CALL TO ORDER /ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The public hearing was called to order by Jim Christoffersen, General Counsel, on August 5, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., in the Little Theatre in Daniel Boone High School, 1440 Suncrest Drive, Gray (Johnson City), regarding the following Certificate of Need Application: CN1605-021 - East Tennessee Healthcare Holdings, Inc. to be located at 203 Gray Commons Circle, Johnson City (Washington County), Tennessee, 37615.

Mr. Christoffersen provided instructions for those speaking about the application.

Mr. Christoffersen informed the audience that this was a fact-finding public hearing and the application will be presented to the Agency members for review at the Health Services and Development Agency Meeting in Nashville, TN.

Mr. Christoffersen, General Counsel, explained the process for filing support and/or opposition with the Health Services and Development Agency, the criteria by which the decision to approve or deny must be made by law, legal requirements for being eligible to file an administrative appeal of the Agency's decision to approve or deny the applications, and the administrative appeal process.

APPLICANT'S PRESENTATION:

Robert Pack, Professor and Associate Dean, East Tennessee State University, discussed the creation of the non-profit opioid treatment program and East Tennessee Healthcare Holdings, Inc. He stated the problem needs to be addressed and dealt with by deciding to introduce the treatment of opioid abuse treatment with substitution based treatment. They are committed to help be part of the solution and will be good neighbors if they are allowed to do. The reversal programs, primary prevention programs begin to cover the whole problem versus the treatment of just the addiction. ETSU will be evaluation and research focused. The applicant will be a good neighbor. This project can help make the region the epicenter of the solution.

Lindy White, Vice President of Mountain States Health Alliance, stated that East Tennessee Health Care Holdings, Inc. was a private non-profit organization that works with individuals. Opioid addiction is a serious problem, which is widespread. It's a complex problem that does not have one solution. Applicant refused to open a traditional methadone clinic. The proposed project will be a different model with counseling, education, prevention, and research. This is a collaborative effort between ETSU and MSHA. This project will help make the community a safer place to live. This will be a recovery based treatment center with a broad continuum of care. Update on alternative sites- Mayor Eldridge offered an alternative location. MSHA Board met with ETSU and found the site not suitable for the proposed project.

SUPPORT

Theresa Kidd, President/CEO, Frontier Health Systems, support the outpatient treatment center. It's a comprehensive approach to address recovery based treatment and wrap around services. The program will work towards abstinence. This is a non-profit entity so funds will go back into research. The proposed clinic will meet need and orderly development criteria as there are no methadone clinics in the service area.

Paul Triverte, Less than 12% of patients that need a methadone clinic have access to care. Area residents are going to Knoxville and North Carolina. This medication saves lives. MSHA and ETSU are great partners.

OPPOSITION

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

State Representative Micah Van Huss- Reiterated that they are not opposed to helping people but are opposed to having the methadone clinic in Gray, TN.

Mike Ford, County Commissioner- cited the locations of multiple schools and day cares. Also stating the area spent millions of dollars to improve the traffic flows and most side streets are inaccessible.

Clarence Mabe, Member of the School Board- Speaking on behalf of the 3,000 students in the school district. Discussed his support of ETSU and asked why the methadone clinic couldn't be on the campus or at Franklin Woods. Also stating that ETSU, MSHA, and Frontier Health should have it in a medical community versus a quiet residential community.

Ed Graybeal, Sheriff Washington County- The county jail has multiple programs available for inmates that promote a drug free lifestyle. The program is needed, just not needed in this area.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY:

The opposition presented oral testimony: Danny Sells, Kent Harris, Samuel Plucker, Howards Darnell, Lorenzo Ramunno, Pamela Davis, Thomas Schacht, Karen Smail, Becky Sutton, Jeff Rhoton, Bart Walker, Pamela Wallace, William Harold, Debbie Wyse, Bob Miller, Wendy Fleenor, Bill Burke, and Phillip Rowan. Below are the shared concerns, which included:

- Concerned with placing a Methadone Clinic around three local schools, residential areas, and high traffic areas. Discussed addiction of methadone being just as bad as or worse than the prescription drugs they are replacing. Suboxone treatment and drug rehabilitation centers should be priority instead of methadone clinics. The concerns are of the problems it brings to the area. It brings, murder, violence, suicide rates increase, and other treacherous issues.
- Location is not conducive to local farm land, clientele, or traffic concerns. 66 parking spots, there are no metropolitan police officers that patrol that area as they are considered covered by the county/ sheriff's department.
- Need in the Community – There is a need to combat opioid addiction. The success and goals of the treatment need to be the environment and a productive individual in society. Methadone and Buprenorphine do not help accomplish those goals. The proposed site doesn't fit the true needs, as it is the furthest points away from the hospitals, clinics, or doctors. The community is not annexed by Johnson City, and there are no resources for the individual in case of emergency.
- Orderly Development of Healthcare- The individuals need to be in a place that doesn't compose a threat to their health. The hours of operation are between 5 am and 3 pm. The Buprenorphine and Methadone put the individuals in an intoxicated state, in a high traffic area. The region has the worst access to Psychiatric healthcare. The system can't even cope with the psychiatric co-morbidities of these individuals. A lot of Frontier Health Psychiatrists are

inept to treat these individuals as the local doctors are forced to prescribe medications instead of the Psychiatrist. Methadone and Buprenorphine do not work as proved in the February 2015 CDC results. There are more overdoses in the United States than any other country.

- Mountain States time and time again indicated they would consider changing the location and it appears that the community's voice wasn't heard.
- Orderly Development – Unique partnership of the provider and Academic providers. The evidence based treatment plan, is not proven by the amount of staff. The patient to clinical staff and physician time ratio is not sufficient to provide reliable care.
- It doesn't matter where the Methadone clinic will be located, as ETSU can send the researchers/students to those facilities. What if it was put at the Johnson City Veterans Hospital?
- Primary concerns for the safety of the children. With the amount of "drug traffic" that comes with this type of facility.
- The rural area of Gray, TN, is primarily a Washington County area, four schools in a 2.-2.5 mile vicinity. The nearest hospitals are 25-30 minutes away, what happens with the medication management? The CON states that an innovative model will be created to wean the people off of methadone. When will patients be weaned off of methadone not ten years to twenty years later? There is no public transportation available in this area. There is no police force/no security.
- Take back programs, Substance abuse, over prescribing, and street issues. What are we doing to target the problem the opioids and other drugs are causing? Safety and security. Pharmacies are robbed and so are methadone clinics. It causes major concern for the wellbeing of the area.
- Mountain States Health Alliance has used bully tactics, intimidation, and forcing community leaders to accept this project. Methadone has never cured anyone, as it is a consistent form of substituting one poison for another. Zoning rules shouldn't be changed. Why should the safety of patients overrule the safety of residents? There is not a substance abuse problem in Gray. Methadone is a nasty drug. It is a liquid prison substituting an \$80/day habit with a \$13/day habit.

APPLICANT'S RESPONSE

Mountain States declined to respond with further comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Jim Christoffersen adjourned the Public Hearing at 9:30 p.m.



Mark Farber, Deputy Director
MF/maa