

The Outlook for Palm Drive Hospital

R10: Sonoma County should show financial interest and use of influence to aid smaller hospitals. The County, as stated in its mission statement, is committed to providing superior and courteous services to support, preserve, and enhance the health of Sonoma County citizens. Therefore, Palm Drive Hospital should be preserved. (Page 38)

Response: The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has partially implemented this recommendation.

The County does not have any dedicated or discretionary funds to aid smaller hospitals throughout Sonoma County. On the other hand, the County has been assisting the viability of district hospitals in other ways. At the regular Board of Supervisors meeting on August 5, 2008, the Board voted to approve a resolution authorizing the County Treasurer to purchase a one year note in an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000 from the Palm Drive Health Care District ("District"). The purpose of this note was to fulfill the needs of the District's bankruptcy Plan of Adjustment.

In this same action, the Board requested the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector to develop a lending policy for future guidance in the event that similar requests are made of the County, either by other small hospitals or any other organizations. Upon completion of this lending policy, which is anticipated to occur by October, 2008, this recommendation will be fully implemented.

The Board recognizes that district hospitals, such as Palm Drive Hospital, play an important role in Sonoma County's health care delivery system. District hospitals provide essential emergency and medical services. In 2006, Palm Drive Hospital provided over 7,500 emergency room visits. In addition, given their geographic isolation, district hospitals often are the only source of care for their communities and the best option for rapid emergency assistance.

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services is working with Palm Drive Hospital to improve communication between providers and county mental health services and coordinating and expanding County programs for at risk residents.

The County recognizes Palm Drive Hospital's important role in providing high quality, accessible health care services for the residents of Sonoma County. Palm Drive Hospital, along with other district hospitals, is regularly consulted regarding health-related initiatives by the Health Department.