

JeffCo's Dedication to Health Care
Guest Notebook by Tony Petelos

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Jefferson County's commitment to the people who have historically been served by Cooper Green Mercy Hospital has not changed.

The transition of Cooper Green Mercy Hospital is underway. It will result in a healthcare model that protects our historic commitment to provide access to quality healthcare. During this transition, healthcare services will go uninterrupted.

The County Commission's resolution to transition to a new way of providing cost-effective, quality healthcare is part of an ongoing process to create a 21st century healthcare model we can all be proud of. The intent is to maximize the millions of dollars that Jefferson County taxpayers have provided to serve the patients of Cooper Green Mercy Hospital. The Commission gave me the responsibility to assemble a team of healthcare and business professionals to move forward.

The care of our patients is my greatest priority. I will not rush this transition to reach pre-set timelines, nor will I allow it to be politicized. This is a highly specialized process. That is why Jefferson County has turned to the experienced guidance of a healthcare resource officer to lead efforts to secure service agreements with area healthcare providers during this transition. These agreements will ensure that Jefferson County's historic commitment to provide healthcare strengthens Cooper Green Mercy's mission.

This is an emotional issue for many people in our county. I have heard your concerns. I know the employees of Cooper Green Mercy have many questions during this transition. For all of those expressing doubts or concerns, let me assure you, we care. In the coming months, there will be many opportunities to inform and engage the employees, the patients and the whole community as the transition moves forward.

Understand this issue is not isolated to Jefferson County. The model that created Cooper Green Mercy Hospital 40 years ago is now proving financially unsustainable. Many communities throughout the country have faced the same situation. Currently, Nashville's public hospital is undergoing a process very similar to our own.

We have an opportunity here. Medical advances and new strategies to provide care are powering new ways of delivering healthcare throughout the medical community. Jefferson County will be part of that. Our region boasts a

world-class, 21st century healthcare center. As we move forward with the transition of Cooper Green Mercy Hospital, let's focus on developing an effective 21st century model for those who have traditionally been served by the Sixth Avenue facility.

Yes, the emotions surrounding change often create rumors and misinformation. We want you to be informed. To clear up any confusion, resources and accurate information can be found at a new website, CooperGreenFuture.com. You will also be able to find ways to get involved and offer your thoughts during this process.

The transition of Cooper Green Mercy is underway. Our commitment to provide accessible, quality healthcare for the patients will not change.

Tony Petelos is chief executive officer of Jefferson County