

PRESS RELEASE

February 4th, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR !
HOSPITAL •
Key West

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At today's Public Meeting of The Lower Florida Keys Hospital District Board of Commissioners, Commissioner's agree to open the forum to other Hospital Operators to present their interest publicly in becoming the successor lessee of Lower Keys Medical Center, a Public Hospital, considering the existing lessee agreement with operator CHS ends April 1st, 2029.

Prior to today's agreement, only the existing Hospital Operator who is seeking a renewal or extension of their lease were presenting their interest publicly to the District Board of Commissioners over the past year. It was concluded that beginning at the next Hospital District Board Meeting, - March 4th, 2025, there will be equal time for interested Hospital Operators to present their interest publicly. The board discussed various methods to publicly notify other potential interested Hospitals.

Peter Batty Sr, the chairman of the newly formed Community Fact Finding Committee, consisting of Community Members who were each appointed by the District Commissioners requested from the Board of Commissioners approval for them to engage Independent Outside Counsel to advise them on the complex legal issues, likely inclusive of the complex relationships between The District Hospital and Private Entity Kennedy Drive.

Ultimately, the motion to authorize the Community Fact Finding Committee's request for Independent Outside Counsel was approved.

Voting in favor of the Fact Finding Committee's request for Independent Outside Counsel was Dr. Lesley Thompson, Erica Sterling, Mary Chambers and Mary Spottswood. **Voting against the Committee's request for Outside Counsel** was James Muir, Stephen Hammond and Chairwoman Kathy Ovide. Commissioner Richard Toppino was absent from the meeting.

OUR HOSPITAL Key West (OHkw) is in agreement with the Community Fact Finding Committee's position that Independent Outside Counsel is necessary, and grateful the vote of the District Commissioners passed in favor granting their request. OHkw is also in agreement that an open forum of additional Hospital Operators presenting their interest is necessary along side the existing Hospital Operator, CHS, to contemplate the existing lease expiration in April 2029.

OHkw presented that there is significant community sentiment in favor of a new Hospital Facility to serve our community's future generations given the age and cost for any Hospital Operator to maintain the aging Stock Island and leased Kennedy Drive facility, and to consider this when contemplating Hospital Operator opportunities beyond 2029.

OUR HOSPITAL Key West (OHkw) is a grassroots advocacy group of Key West Residents advocating on behalf of the Public to achieve objective comparisons from as many leading Hospital Operators for the imminent expiration of our current Hospital Operator lease on April 1st, 2029.

OHkw provides more information at OHkw.org. Please reach out to info@OHkw.org for any questions or comments.