

**From:** Anne Donahue

**Sent:** Sunday, April 17, 2022 3:15 PM

**Subject:** North County Hospital CON

Hello Donna,

I have been reviewing the pending CON application from North County Hospital. I note with appreciation that the GMCB asked the hospital in its first set of questions "if and how" the hospital included the "mental health advocacy community" for review and comment on the emergency department schematic design.

I found the response of great concern, and am writing to express the hope that there will be follow-up questions to the hospital on this issue.

Specifically, North County responded to the question by identifying no individuals who are a part of the advocacy community, or any patients, as being involved in review of the schematic design -- the only involvement described was by Northeast Kingdom Human Services staff. The response added that those same NKHS individuals "will further participate in the design detail phase."

They volunteered the added information regarding the desire of "community members and legislators" for an offsite mental health and substance abuse center for the Northeast Kingdom, again making no reference to involvement by the mental health advocacy community or potential services recipients. This appears to evidence a lack of recognition in terms of the importance of direct engagement with those most affected by, and most knowledgeable about, mental health crises and optimal design for the kind of respectful and emotionally safe care that is required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Having failed to indicate that such individuals were involved in comments on the design thus far, it would seem to be an appropriate inquiry regarding any intention to include mental health advocates or consumers in the future design detail phase.

Thank you,

Anne Donahue