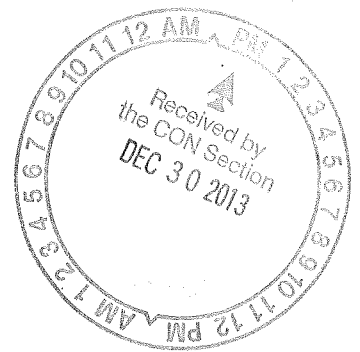


December 20, 2013



Mr. Craig Smith, Chief
Certificate of Need Section
N. C. Dept. Of Health and Human Services
2704 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-2704

Dear Mr. Smith:

It has come to my attention that Novant Health Franklin Medical Center submitted a Certificate of Need (CON) application to relocate one of the hospital's operating rooms to a planned surgery center in the Youngsville area of southwestern Franklin County. This is reminiscent of Novant's failed attempts to close our Louisburg hospital in 2007 and 2008.

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Franklin County to oppose this project. Novant proposes to invest over \$10 million into the planned surgery center in Youngsville. These resources would be better spent in improving the healthcare resources in Louisburg. Louisburg has all the necessary infrastructure, and is the center of healthcare for the county, with many physician offices, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, county health department, and other agencies that make Louisburg the best location for hospital services.

Our hospital's services in Louisburg are very important to us. When Novant was granted an operating room for Youngsville in 2007, they assured everyone it was all they would need. I am concerned that removal of yet another hospital OR will negatively impact access to care for many Franklin County residents. Novant's plan to relocate a second OR is clearly targeting residents of Wake County. **Is it a good idea to move hospital services, located in the center of Franklin County, to the far southwestern corner of the county? The answer is no.**

I feel strongly that a better plan for all county residents is for Novant to invest in healthcare services in Louisburg. All of the main county roads lead to Louisburg, so this is obviously an ideal location for serving all county residents. This is particularly important, given that our county is less affluent and elderly and lower income residents depend on access to the hospital as their primary healthcare provider.

I appreciate the quality of life we enjoy in Franklin County, and recognize that access to the quality healthcare is an important part of that quality. The Novant proposal is simply not the right answer, and will decrease access to care, especially for the medically underserved. The proposed project is the wrong solution. I hope the State will disapprove this plan.

Sincerely,

Bernice A. Alston