

Del Norte Healthcare District Newsletter Nov. 25, 2018

We welcome your ideas on how to improve healthcare services and lower costs

Visit the Del Norte Healthcare District website

There are two healthcare boards in Del Norte--One elected by voters and the other appointed by Sutter Health

If you are interested in quality, affordable healthcare, the Del Norte Healthcare District would like your input.

The Healthcare District is a five person board elected by county voters to address local healthcare needs. We constructed the clinic building on the corner of Washington Blvd. and Northcrest Drive, where medical and dental services are provided through Open Door Clinics. We are in the process of expanding our campus to include additional dental capacity, affordable MRI, and a visiting specialist clinic and possible surgery center, so residents can receive care at reasonable prices without leaving the area.

The current Healthcare District Board members are Kevin Caldwell, Shellie Babich, Dwayne Reichlin, Terry McNamara and Greg Duncan. Incoming Board members are Mike Young, Dohn Henion, and Elizabeth Austen. We hold open public meetings, usually on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Our meeting times, agendas and minutes are posted on the Del Norte County web site at <http://www.co.del-norte.ca.us/>

The other health care related board in Del Norte County operates Sutter Coast Hospital. Current Sutter Coast Board members are hospital CEO Mitch Hanna, Sutter Health executive Grant Davies, Scott Feller, Mojgan Arshi, John Jacobson, David Itzen, Ken Hall, Clarke Moore, Thomas Polidore, Warren Rehwaldt, David Wilson, David Gibbs, and Ron Sandler. Other than the hospital Chief of Staff, Sutter Coast Board members are appointed by Sutter Health in Sacramento. Sutter Health has the power to remove all the appointed Sutter Coast Board members at any time, without cause. Sutter Health also requires the Sutter Coast Board to be loyal to Sutter Health.

The Sutter Coast Hospital Board meetings are closed to the public. No observers are allowed. No meeting notes are released. Sutter Health officials have required the Sutter Coast Board members to sign confidentiality agreements, restricting hospital board members from answering questions or notifying the public of decisions made in the hospital board room. Sutter Health and the Sutter Coast Board refuse to release hospital meeting notes and financial records, despite requests for those records from the City Council of Crescent City and the Board of Supervisors of Del Norte County.

In 2011, the Sutter Coast Board voted (behind closed doors) to dissolve itself and transfer hospital ownership to a Sutter Health corporation in the Bay Area. Dr. Kevin Caldwell was on the hospital Board at that time and was the only hospital Board member to vote against the transfer of ownership. Widespread local opposition to the transfer of ownership prompted the Sutter Coast Board to reverse itself and continue local hospital ownership.

The Sutter Coast Hospital Board also voted (behind closed doors) to triple fees on Medicare patients, close half of the acute care hospital beds, and place limits on how long patients can stay at Sutter Coast Hospital. Dr. Greg Duncan

was on the hospital Board at that time and cast the only “no” vote to Sutter’s plans. But due to the efforts of numerous elected officials and thousands of residents, once again Sutter’s closed door plans were stopped.

For the past three years, the Sutter Coast Board approved an ER doctor corporation which bills patients “out of network” for emergency room treatment (costing patients more “out of pocket” dollars). Once again, the Del Norte Healthcare District Board, City Council of Crescent City, and Del Norte County Board of Supervisors joined forces to oppose the “out of network” ER billing. Curry County commissioners also voted to oppose the billing practices at the Sutter Coast ER. And again, community opposition to Sutter Coast was successful-- Sutter Coast Hospital recently announced the end of “out of network” ER doctor billing for most insurance plans.

The Del Norte Healthcare District Board invites you to join us on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in our conference room in the clinic building on Washington Blvd. and Northcrest Drive. Visit our website at www.delnortehealthcare.org, email us at dnhcd@delnortehealth.com or call us at 707-464-9494 from 8 am to 12 noon weekdays. The Healthcare District Board thanks all the local officials and residents who have supported our goal of accessible, affordable healthcare. Let’s keep the momentum going!

Written and approved by the Del Norte Healthcare District Board of Directors. Previously published in The Del Norte Triplicate, available at : [Click to link to Del Norte Triplicate](#)

Thank you for all of your help and ideas!