Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Chair	*District 1*	*District 2*	*District 3*
Amanda Edwards	Al Whitesides	Martin Moore	Parker Sloan
	Jennifer Horton	Terri Wells	Drew Ball

On behalf of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, I write to express our strong support for the Certificate of Need application filed by UNC Health West Medical Center to develop a new 92-bed acute care hospital on the western side of Asheville.

The North Carolina 2026 State Medical Facilities Plan identified a need for 92 additional acute care beds in the Buncombe, Clay, Graham, Madison, and Yancey County multicounty service area, reflecting sustained population growth and rising demand for acute care services across our region. The proposed site located west of the French Broad River near the interstate interchange serving the western approach to the county is uniquely positioned to serve as a point of entry for patients traveling into Buncombe County from Clay, Graham, Madison, and Yancey Counties, communities that do not currently enjoy convenient access to acute care services at any hospital located within Buncombe County.

This need was made painfully clear during Hurricane Helene in the fall of 2024, when road and interstate closures severely limited the ability of residents in our region's rural counties to reach acute care services. That experience underscored the importance of a well-distributed network of accessible emergency and inpatient care throughout Buncombe County.

The Board of Commissioners is committed to ensuring that all residents of the county, including those in our westernmost communities and those traveling from neighboring rural counties, have timely and reliable access to emergency and acute care services. We view the development of additional acute care capacity as directly consistent with the County's public health, safety, and economic development priorities.

UNC Health has a longstanding and well-regarded presence in western North Carolina, including its affiliated hospitals and ambulatory facilities serving the region, and has demonstrated a sustained commitment to the health of Buncombe County residents through the provision of high-quality, accessible care. We further note that development of UNC Health West Medical Center is anticipated to generate substantial economic benefit to Buncombe County, including construction and permanent employment opportunities, capital investment, and an expanded local tax base.

Having reviewed the general scope, location, and public benefit of the proposed project, the Board of Commissioners finds that its approval would serve the interests and welfare of Buncombe County and its residents. We respectfully urge the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Service Regulation, to approve this application in recognition of the demonstrated need, the public benefit of the proposed site, and the project's alignment with our region's health access and economic development priorities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,