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## Mission Health signs definitive agreement with HCA

Mission Health's Board of Directors announced last week in a press release that Mission Health and HCA Healthcare (HCA) have entered into a definitive agreement for HCA to acquire Mission Health. The Agreement will be sent to the North Carolina Attorney General for applicable regulatory review.

As part of its normal regulatory review process, the attorney general will evaluate any effect the transaction could have on market competition, whether HCA Healthcare is paying a fair price for the acquisition and how proceeds resulting from the sale will continue to benefit western North Carolina.

The proceeds of the sale combined with Mission Health's remaining cash and investments - after all debts and obligations have been paid - will ultimately be transferred to the newly formed Dogwood Health Trust, whose sole mission is to dramatically improve the health and well-being of all people and communities of western North Carolina.

"From the very beginning, Mission Health's Board worked diligently and continually to ensure that the very best path was selected for the people of western North Carolina and to make certain that our community has access to high quality, effective and compassionate care for generations to come," said Mission Health Board Chair John R. Ball, MD, JD. "After completing due diligence and finalizing definitive agreements that have significant protections for our rural communities, we are convinced that HCA Healthcare is the right and best choice for western North Carolina and Mission's team members, providers and patients. It is heartening to share that every single Mission Health member entity Board voted unanimously to approve this transaction."

"Mission Health has an impressive, more than 130-year tradition of caring for communities throughout western North Carolina and we are delighted to have finalized our agreements so that we can help continue their legacy," said Milton Johnson, HCA Healthcare's chairman and CEO. "As a healthcare provider founded by physicians 50 years ago ourselves, we

share Mission Health's focus on excellence and we look forward to investing in western North Carolina to improve the health of the region."

Mission Health will continue to be managed locally while HCA Healthcare brings its significant capabilities in operations, capital access, clinical trials, research, predictive modeling, analytics and more to augment Mission Health's existing capabilities. HCA Healthcare Behavioral Health Services is one of the nation's largest acute care psychiatric providers. HCA Healthcare also brings a strong track record of assisting older adults in meeting their unique healthcare needs, and their system not only includes advanced geriatric care but also supports specialized geriatric emergency services and programs tailored to healthy aging.

"HCA's Sarah Cannon Cancer Institute has been the clinical trial leader in the majority of approved cancer therapies in the last decade and roughly 60% (106 of 177) of HCA Healthcare's hospitals are on The Joint Commission's list of Top Performers," said John W. Garrett, MD, Vice Chair of the Mission Health Board. "Also, we know how essential nurses are in delivering high quality, compassionate care; ten HCA Healthcare hospitals rank among only eight percent of hospitals nationwide that are Magnet-designated indicating the highest quality of nursing excellence and innovations in professional nursing practice."

HCA Healthcare has agreed to pay approximately \$1.5 billion for the assets of the Mission Health System. Under the terms of the definitive agreement, nearly all Mission Health facilities and clinics will become part of HCA Healthcare while continuing to operate under the Mission brand. Importantly, HCA has committed to maintaining key clinical services for at least five years and keeping open all rehabilitation and acute-care hospitals for a minimum of 10 years, other than St. Joseph's Hospital which was already planned for the transition. Likewise, HCA has agreed not to sell any rehabilitation or acute-care hospital for a minimum of 10 years. None of these protections exist for

Mission Health programs or facilities today.

Further, HCA Healthcare has committed to \$430 million over five years in capital expenditures which includes the completion of the Mission Hospital for Advanced Medicine, building a replacement hospital for Angel Medical Center and building a new Behavioral Health hospital. Additionally, HCA will contribute \$25 million, that when combined with a matching \$25 million contribution from Mission Health, will create a \$50 million innovation fund to invest in businesses providing innovations in health care delivery that benefit the people of western North Carolina.

"HCA Healthcare looks forward to providing high-quality services to the residents of western North Carolina," said Chuck Hall, President of HCA's National Group. "I was delighted by my visits to western North Carolina, meeting with the terrific people there and touring so many wonderful facilities. Mission Health's national reputation as a leader in clinical excellence and patient-centered care is consistent with our focus on quality and safety. Mission will be an exceptional addition to the HCA Healthcare family."

"The Mission Health Board has been steadfast in its desire to truly improve the health status of the people of western North Carolina. They believe that joining HCA Healthcare is an extraordinary opportunity to build upon Mission Health's exceptional quality, ensure that every entity within Mission Health has significant protections that it lacks today and to create a remarkable foundation that intends to invest in the social determinants of health," said Ronald A. Paulus, MD, President and CEO of Mission Health. "HCA Healthcare has a strong track record of enhancing its hospitals' operations and a proven history of investing in the communities it serves. The fact that we have ensured unprecedented protections for our rural communities in western North Carolina, enabled a \$50 million innovation fund and created the Dogwood Health Trust all demonstrate how this transaction will be transformative for our region."

## DMV staying busy here and across the state

Offices of the DMV are busier than usual as people line up to upgrade to the soon-to-be-required REAL ID.

"REAL ID is the new form of ID that alone will allow you to be on airplanes or access any federal facility or military base beginning in 2020, according to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles.

The federal identification standard is changing, and a state-issued driver's license will no longer be sufficient for those who want to fly, enter a federal building like a courthouse or visit a military base.

Those who don't make a change will have licenses that say "not for federal identification" and will have to bring additional documents to access those places.

The North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles says last week that it has sent mobile units across the state to help workers at major employers obtain REAL IDs faster.

To enable more people across the state to obtain REAL IDs faster, NCDMV has been working with several of North Carolina's major employers since the spring to help their employees get REAL IDs. DMV has deployed mobile units to the work sites of large employers

One of the changes the DMV said they were making is hiring more staff to cut down wait times. Here is their latest update from DMV Spokesman Jamie Kritzer:

"Regarding the hiring of additional staff, 16 new driver license examiners will be at various offices across NC beginning Sept. 4th, 36 offers have been made to current applicants, and applications for additional positions have been posted and are being received," Brockwell said.

## Yancey County Schools receive grant for school nurse

Yancey County Schools were recently notified that they are the recipient of a one-year grant for a school nurse position. The school nurses, Karen Brown, Yvonne Hardin, and Leslie Bryant, completed the School Mental Health Personnel Grant this summer.

The General Assembly worked with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to begin the School Safety Grants Program to improve safety in public schools for students in crisis.

School mental health support personnel include school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers. The grant opportunity came at the right time for Yancey County Schools since one nursing position was to be eliminated for the 2018-19 school year. This grant has enabled one nurse position to continue for one more year.

The grant criteria included identifying current and ongoing needs and costs associated with improving student health and well-being in public schools; following State Professional Standards for nurse positions along with implementing evidence-based practices; and collaborating with parents, teachers, staff and outside services to ensure the best interests of students are met. Nurses address a wide range of student health needs from cuts and bruises to assessing flu and strep throat. Attention from school nurses helps ensure students are in attendance unless they are sick. Prompt assessments help shorten student illnesses and reduces exposure for others. School nurses, along with



A line forms at the DMV office on North Main Street in Burnsville, minutes before the office reopens after lunch. The office has experienced long lines each day as examiners are busy issuing the new real Id's. Photo by David Grindstaff

Another change the DMV had made to cut down wait times is adding an express lane. The express lane is meant for fast transactions like issuing a duplicate ID.

DMV also made REAL ID services temporarily available to employees of state government, one of the state's largest employers, at a training room

at NCDMV Headquarters in Raleigh. State employees of various state agencies were notified of the temporary services by email. The DMV training room is typically used to test equipment and train staff and was used to provide temporary driver license services for 9-15 hours a month from January through early August.

## Yancey History Assoc. election of officers at annual open meeting

The Nominations Committee for the Yancey History Association is now accepting the names of eligible candidates to be put in nomination for the offices of President and Secretary of the Board of Directors.

Voting by the general membership will take place at the Annual Open Meeting scheduled for Sunday, October 14th from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Yancey County Library on School Circle in Burnsville. Anyone wishing to nominate a candidate for

President and/or Secretary can contact any member of the Nominations Committee via the YHA Office at 828-678-9587 prior to the Annual Meeting or make a nomination from the floor at the meeting before the vote is taken.

A special program, "The Filming of the Story of Charlie and Frankie Silver", will be presented by Theresa and Ryan Phillips after a short business session. Refreshments will be served.

## Carolina Mountain Literary Festival this weekend

This is the week of the Carolina Mountains Literary Festival - Surface and Rise- on September 6-8 in Burnsville, NC.

Burnsville Town Center is Lit Fest central. There your questions will be answered. You can pick up a schedule and check for changes, pick up your "tickets" and register for available events.

The Festival begins on Thursday night with a free performance by National Poetry Slam Finalist, Grammy Winning Hip Hop Artist, Kane Smego.

All day on Friday and Saturday, dozens of authors will give free readings and discussions of children's literature, fiction, memoir, non-fiction, poetry and young adult fiction. Also during the day are 3-hour writing workshops in fiction, memoir, non-fiction, and poetry. Registration is required \$30 for the writing workshops. Check at the Festival for availability.

Saturday afternoon on the Burnsville Town Square, step into the tent of the Amazing Alphabetini and explore the magic of letters and words. Friday night's Banquet with

James Beard Award Winner, Michael Twitty, is sold out.

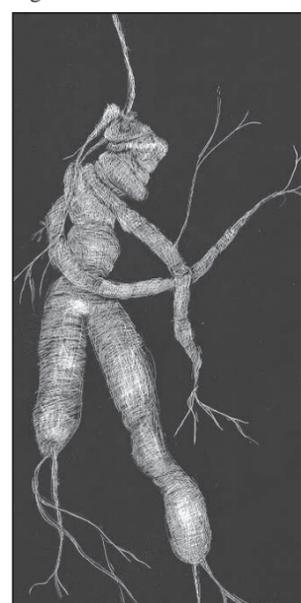
Check at the Festival for possible cancellations.

There are seats available to hear National Book Award Finalist Gail Godwin. She grew up and lived as an adult in Asheville and many of her books are set in Western North Carolina. She often fictionalizes her own life in her novels. Her talk fits this year's theme of Surface and Rise with: "A Desperate Place"- "the place in your psyche where you find yourself...in a situation...that you may feel powerless to change." Registration for her inspiring talk is \$20.

Be sure to browse and buy books at the Malaprop's Festival Bookstore. Malaprop's will donate 10% of sales to the AMY Regional Library Bookmobile Gas Fund. Authors will sign books at the morning and afternoon book-signings.

There will be a silent auction to benefit the Festival. Altered Book Centerpieces and the framed Festival artwork by Rhea Ormond will be available. Chad Fox, Town Center Manager says, "The Carolina

Mountains Literary Festival is exactly the kind of event the Town Center was designed to host. Well organized and great for the local economy, the festival helps promote Burnsville's identity as a unique, creative place. Year after year, the festival organizers have put together days of events that are entertaining and informative."



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## Still time to donate to Fall Flea sale

After a successful pre-school clothing and accessory sale, Helping Hands of Yancey County is gearing up for their huge Fun Flea Sale coming mid-September.

Until Wednesday, September 12th, donations of gently-used items are being accepted every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday between 9 AM to 4 PM at their location at 621 Micaville Loop (the former Taylor Togs building).

"Donations from the community have been outstanding

this year and we are very thankful" said President, Pat Terrell. "We literally have something for everyone, and I don't know anyone who doesn't enjoy a good bargain."

Mark your calendar for the upcoming sale dates: Friday, September 14th and Saturday, 15th 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Sunday, September 16, 2018 between 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.. Helping Hands of Yancey County is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports local charities.