



The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

May

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SCRIPPS CLOSURE: A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH

I have grave concerns over the proposed closure of Scripps East County Hospital. For residents of the back country, Scripps East County is their lifeline. The next closest hospital is an additional 15-20 minutes west. When you are transporting a child who has drowned, or a grandfather who has had a heart attack – this additional time could be the difference between life and death. For all residents of East County, Scripps East closure will mean longer lines in the emergency rooms of Alvarado and Grossmont hospitals.

If Scripps abandons the East County like they are planning – I say, *give someone else a chance*. Give someone else the opportunity to buy this hospital!

In a recent letter to Frank Panarisi, Chairman of the Scripps

Health Board of Trustees, I called for three things on behalf of the people of East County. First, that Scripps extend the June 5th closure date for at least six months in order for other potential buyers to be able to negotiate the purchase of the hospital. Second, for Scripps to suspend the license and leave the hospital equipment in tact so that it will be easier to transfer the hospital to a potential buyer. Third, that Scripps help to develop and finance a mitigation plan to alleviate the negative impacts of this closure.

In a letter from the Scripps Health Board of Trustees, Chairman Panarisi declined to extend the date of the planned closure citing “untenable financial losses,” and also called it “logistically infeasible.” Panarisi noted that Scripps has submitted a request for a license suspension, and stated the hospital will participate in the exploration of various mitigation options.

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The proposed closure will mean potentially 24,000 emergency room visits for Grossmont and Alvarado. Grossmont emergency room is on bypass- this means their emergency room is full 30% of the time! What will happen with an additional 24,000 emergency room visits?

I'll tell you what will happen- long lines at the emergency room door and longer distances to travel which means lives will be at risk!

Several questions deserve an answer.

1. If Scripps East was in fact losing money since 1996, why didn't they ask East County elected officials for help?
2. Why didn't Scripps East inform the East County people and their elected representatives prior to March 7th?
3. Why didn't Scripps East engage in an aggressive marketing campaign to try to increase market share?
4. Why did Scripps choose to only give us the 90 days notice – the minimum required by law – that they were going to close the hospital?

Is it because this closure has been planned for sometime?

Is it because Scripps doesn't care about the people in East County?

Is it because Scripps doesn't care whether or not people die?

Scripps mission is "to make a measurable, positive difference in the health of the individuals in the communities [they] serve... promote wellness and improve the quality of life for those with chronic illness." Also, "to collaborate with others in programs that improve the health of our community."

Scripps should either scrap their mission statement or live up to it!

All we are asking for is more time – more time to work together – to collaborate with others – to assure actions are taken so that no lives are lost as a result of Scripps' announced closure of this hospital.

I don't think this is too much to ask! Do you?

WORTH NOTING...

- **Combating Domestic Violence with “Hot Cards”**

According to the National Crime Survey, battery is still the single major cause of injury to women in the United States. A woman is physically abused by her husband every 9 seconds in this country. It is staggering that nearly half of domestic violence incidents go unreported. In an effort to reach out to victims of domestic violence, Supervisor Jacob initiated a proposal that provides \$1,800 in East County Community Reinvestment funding to the East County Domestic Violence Coalition for reproduction of the “Hot Card.”

The “Hot Card” outlines a safety plan, provides a quick guide where victims can go for legal needs, shelters and other services, as well as a checklist to identify whether or not the holder is involved in an abusive relationship. The cards will be given to front-line East County law enforcement, service providers, hospitals and courts. These front-line agencies will, in turn, provide the “Hot Cards” to potential victims of domestic violence. The funding Jacob provided will produce an estimated 50,000 cards for East County. If you have any questions about the “Hot Cards” or the East County Domestic Violence Coalition contact Peggy Dolan at (619) 660-7400.

- **East County to Retain 619 Area Code**

619, 760, 858...and that’s all for now. East County has reason to celebrate!

The California Public Utilities Commission responded to Chairwoman Dianne Jacob's call for action to immediately stop any future area code splits in San Diego County. On May 4, the CPUC decided to indefinitely halt the proposed 935 area code. The 935 area code, proposed to encompass most of east county and south bay, was scheduled for implementation in July.

By halting the implementation of the proposed 935 area code, the CPUC has corrected an unnecessary imposition on this region's consumers," said Chairwoman Jacob. "The addition of area codes simply didn't make sense. There are approximately 7.8 million numbers for each area code. That means without the proposed 935 area code, there are 23.4 million numbers and about 2.7 million people living in this region - that's 8.7 numbers for every man, woman and child!" she added.

In addition to halting the implementation of the 935 area code, the CPUC is expected to study the amount of numbers that exist within the 619 area code, but are unused. The results of the study are expected June 1 of this year.

“The fact is there are millions of unused telephone numbers that could alleviate the need for new area codes,” said Jacob. “According to the *North County Times*, there are as many as 145 million unused phone numbers within existing area codes in this state,” she added.

Jacob promised to take action on the area code crisis at her State of the County address in Janu-

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We hope to hear from you soon!

May/00

The Second District Staff (619)531-5522

Shannan Sorrell

Chief of Staff

David Barber

Director of Land Use & Conservation

Darren Gretler

*Field Representative/
Policy Advisor*

Mike Kulis

Deputy Chief of Staff

Jeff Collins

Policy Advisor

Alan Pentico

Policy Advisor

Donna Sievert

Office Manager & Scheduler

Ryan Smith

Constituent Liaison

Teresa Alvarez

Administrative Assistant

Jill Smith

Chair's Assistant

DIANNE JACOB

*Supervisor, Second District
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101*

*(619) 531-5522
(800) 852-7322 toll free
(619) 696-7253 fax*

*e-mail:
Dianne-Jacob@co.san-diego.ca.us*

*website:
www.diannejacob.com*