

Dear Citizens:

The future of the healthcare delivery system for Valley County and our multi-county service area will be determined by the voters in May.

A Yes vote means that we can ensure state of the art healthcare in this region for decades to come, for our families, for our future. And Yes, it will be done with absolutely no property tax support. A No vote simply means that the healthcare destination for our residents, for obvious reasons will be chosen by others, many miles away.

Our public forums have been well received. So many times attendees approach us and say words to the effect of “we are so grateful that you folks have separated fact from fiction, and knowing that we will support this project”. This Thursday we’ll be in North Loup, and the following Thursday back for our second forum in Ord. Many Burwell citizens have expressed interest in knowing more; we have scheduled time for them. They may not be voters but this is about their interest and future in healthcare as well.

Last Thursday we sponsored a forum in Elyria; just a delightful place and I believe we packed the Elyria Hall. One interesting thing that I need to relay to you is that a document “mysteriously” appeared on our presentation table. That document is my subject today, but first: One of our supporters approached Thelma Pokorny about the distribution of a non registered document and Thelma said she had found a packet of material in her mailbox with a note “that she and Mabel were to distribute at the forum in Elyria”. Our supporter kindly reminded her only the United States Postal Service may use mailboxes for delivery, without paying postage. Before we removed the material, let me tell you what the content was and now our answer so ‘we’ll be able to continue to sort fact from fiction”

“According to the VCHS CEO, projected revenues paid by Medicare are expected to be sufficient to pay the annual principal and interest on the \$21.5 million new hospital project” FACT: That is TRUE

“President Bush unveiled his federal budget proposal for FY 2009 reflecting \$182 billion in Medicare cuts over the next five years” FACT: That is TRUE; However not one dime comes from the Critical Access funding pool, so the negative impact to VCHS is zero

“Medicare’s Hospital Trust Fund will be insolvent by 2019” FACT: The government, for the people, will never allow this to happen to the largest and most important component of the federal budget.

Critical access program could be in jeopardy” and “rural hospitals are facing financial woes”. FACT: We could find no verifiable reference for these sources; however we recognize one of the authors as a publisher of an underground “gloom and doom” newsletter.

“VCHS receives no taxpayer moneys” FACT: that is not true. As we’ve stated in our brochure and promotional material we receive a residual amount of tax funds that IS NOT used for operational purposes. The original intention was for the plant and replacement fund where those funds currently reside. Our Board recently passed a resolution rejecting any future funds from the County taxpayers.

“The \$1.1 million received from Medicare to go towards the \$1.5 million annual principal and interest payment is not related to capital costs reimbursement.” FACT, that statement is False. We can’t expect the author to be completely knowledgeable of the complexities of healthcare financing, so let’s just call that a Draw.

“No Tax Dollars will be needed” FACT: That statement is True.

“Why has the Administrator refused to answer a request for “solid financial feasibility studies”? FACT: I responded immediately in accordance with Nebraska Public Records Statute 84-712. That response is on file for anyone to review.

In conclusion, I refuse not to continue a dialogue with anyone on both sides because of the critical importance associated with the preservation, advancement and nurturing of healthcare for our families and for this community region. I often think of my Dad, in correlation to the Medicare ‘gloom and doom’ speculators. What if my Dad, a retired successful farmer been told by the banker that he couldn’t have his annual operating and equipment loan because “there might be a depression next year”? Now “we” are saying we shouldn’t build because “Medicare might go away next year”. Can we trust the system, can we trust our leadership, do we have faith in our future? Each of you must decide.

Sincerely yours,

Larry E. Schrage  
VCHS CEO.