

The Carolina Forest Civic Association wishes to convey its support of additional medical facilities in our area. The Carolina Forest community has experienced robust and consistent growth since its inception and we have reached a point where additional capacity is necessary to relieve stress from Grand Strand Regional Medical Center and the existing Conway Medical Center location.

The Carolina Forest Civic Association recognizes the strategic benefits of locating a new hospital along International Drive. This location provides quick and life-saving access to residents along both Carolina Forest Boulevard and River Oaks Drive. This location also reduces travel times for residents along SC 90 who may need access to immediate medical care. There is no denying that a new hospital in Carolina Forest is a net benefit for the community, but the Civic Association must bring forward concerns we have regarding the site and access to the proposed hospital.

We question the suitability of building a hospital that will front the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve. As we welcome new medical facilities; the Civic Association also wishes to preserve the natural forests that our residents moved here to enjoy. We are also actively interested in preserving sensitive wetlands in our area, whose impacts will not only harm our ecosystem, but will also raise construction costs for the proposed hospital. Also, the proposed location will sit behind gates used to close International Drive for either controlled burns or wildfires. With that in mind, we must raise the question as to what will happen should a wildfire come close to threatening the newly built hospital?

More importantly, the residents along Gardner Lacy Road will not see the benefits of this new hospital. Until the extension of Gardner Lacy Road is made to International Drive, Gardner Lacy residents will have to contend with congestion along US 501 in order to receive urgent medical care. We at the Carolina Forest Civic Association maintain that we welcome the improvements that have been made to the community, however, we cannot allow Gardner Lacy residents to be overlooked time and again. Development is occurring along Gardner Lacy Road just as it is along Carolina Forest Boulevard, yet there is only one main access into the Gardner Lacy area which is easily congested and easily cut off. It is time that Horry County Council made good on their promise and pursued the extension of Gardner Lacy Road to International Drive.

The Carolina Forest Civic Association stands ready to work with Conway Medical Center and Horry County Council to address the concerns we and our residents have. We look forward to fully embracing a new facility that fits into our community and ensures the quality of life that our community deserves.