

# *The Beaver Island Association*

*Supporting Environmental and Economic Sustainability*

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Tuesday, October 13, 2015

Beaver Island Rural Health Center Board  
Beaver Island Emergency Services Authority Board  
St. James Township Supervisor and Trustees  
Peaine Township Supervisor and Trustees

Dear Township Officials and Healthcare Board Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Beaver Island Association.

Quality rural health care and Emergency Medical Services are critical to welfare of all Beaver Island permanent and part-time residents and tourists. They are also critical to the Beaver Island's present and future economic sustainability. Potential residents considering moving to Beaver Island include both retirees as well as those who are able to work virtually. Both groups expect, at the very least, high quality rural health care and Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Services. Beaver Island Rural Health Center and Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services face many of the same challenges that are experienced by rural health care providers nation-wide. Healthcare was listed as one of the top five priorities for Beaver Island at the recent Maine Islands open house round table discussion.

According to Rural Policy Research Institute report of November 2014: "...accelerating rural hospital closures in recent years have created widespread concern... Moreover, broad health system transformation aimed at achieving the Triple Aim®—improved experience of care, lower costs, and improved health of populations—is bypassing too many rural providers and health systems."

Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services and Beaver Island Rural Health Center are struggling. Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services has lost paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians and First Responders and has tenuous funding. Beaver Island Rural Health Center patient visits have dropped by almost 60% from 3050 in 2009 to 1215 in 2014. Better coordination with Beaver Island Rural Health Center and Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services is critical to achieve best practice emergency healthcare services. Adopting a quality assurance program to improve existing services, and making exceptional use of telemedicine to leverage physician expertise at the Munson Health Center would greatly enhance the resources available to our local medical professionals. As Beaver Island Rural Health Center aligns with Charlevoix Area Hospital, Beaver Island Rural Health Center can expand its telemedicine capability from Charlevoix Area Hospital to the Traverse City Munson Emergency Room, Stroke Center and Level II Trauma Center.

Lyn Jenks, CEO Charlevoix Area Hospital said: "the report from which these recommendations were taken seems solid and well thought out. I hope the report will be well received and acted upon!"

We recommend that both the Beaver Island Rural Health Center and Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services jointly pursue the following:

1. Develop an operations manual that better integrates Beaver Island Rural Health Center and Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services.

2. Develop policies and procedures to align with Charlevoix Area Hospital when it aligns with Munson.
3. Initiate a Quality Assurance program to evolve to Best Practice for Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services and Beaver Island Rural Health Center.
4. Maintain Advanced Life Support EMS at all cost.
5. Expand telemedicine processes to include Munson and possibly McLaren.
6. Complete 2002 ESA TO-DO list.
7. Develop an Island wide disaster plan for Beaver Island Rural Health Center, Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services and Beaver Island Fire Department.
8. Train nurses and Emergency Medical Technicians for paramedic certification.
9. Apply for grants for ambulances, Beaver Island Emergency Medical Services and Beaver Island Rural Health Center personnel training and payroll.
10. Expand outreach, services and education programs.

BIA stands ready to support healthcare and emergency medical services. Some potential support activities might include:

1. Surveying BIA membership and residence to help determine community needs.
2. Test marketing proposed new healthcare services with BIA membership.
3. Coordinating traditional/digital and social media.
4. Performing promotional activities (e.g. thank you party for volunteer services personnel).
5. Coordinating affiliations with university medical and fellow programs (e.g. U of M Medical, Mayo Clinic, etc.).
6. Soliciting investor relationships.
7. Applying for grant funding (FEMA, ACA, CCCF, state, federal).
8. Supporting healthcare and emergency medical services public relations program in BIA newsletters.
9. Promoting and informing BIA membership of the Beaver Island Rural Health Center, Charlevoix Area Hospital and Munson affiliations, alignment and telemedicine opportunities.

Sincerely,

Peter Igoe for the Beaver Island Association Board of Directors

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