

I am amazed at the misinformation and misguided reporting that has happened these past few weeks regarding the new Peace Island Medical Center. I have attended the board meetings as recording secretary for the last seven years and have witnessed the hard work by our Hospital District Commissioners and Peace Health to create the gorgeous new medical facility opening soon.

Were the issues of reproductive healthcare and assisted suicide talked about at the start of negotiations? You bet. These services are not currently offered at the Inter Island Medical Center (IIMC). Neither are births, vasectomies, or colonoscopies, over night stays or a whole host of services. We should be applauding the negotiations and vision by our Hospital Commissioners that realized that the medical center was in financial decline and the building increasingly inadequate. Their decision came down to either diminishing services while raising taxes or closing the medical center all together.

Somehow, our amazing commissioners got Peace Health to agree, in these financial times, to build a small hospital on our island WITHOUT ONE DOLLAR OF OUR TAX MONEY. The ten million dollars that was required from this community toward the building project was raised by donations and funneled through the Community Foundation.

The news story should be about how this new hospital will enrich our lives. Not only is the new facility gorgeous, it is state-of-the-art and the most environmentally friendly hospital in the northern United States. We will have a appropriately staffed 24/7 emergency room (ER). No longer will our dedicated general practitioners have to juggle their time between scheduled patients and emergencies. No longer will cancer patients have to go off island for Chemotherapy.

If you fall or get in a car accident you may not have to stay on a backboard for hours while you are transferred to helicopter to ambulance to off-island ER. You will get a CAT Scan right here. No longer will geriatric patients be shipped off island for such things as electrolyte imbalances. They can be watched overnight right here in one of the ten dedicated beds.

There will be more than just a room in the corner to offer specialists. Now they will come to a state-of-the-art facility, saving us time and money. No more driving off island to see the dermatologist, cardiologist, etc.

Okay, so this hospital won't be doing major operations or births. Cardiac problems, strokes and major trauma emergencies will still be sent off island. It is a small hospital after all. But, it is bringing good paying jobs with benefits to folks who already live here. That money will stay on island.

Also, the tax levy lift that the Medical Center needed to stay afloat will run out in a few years and the tax rate will go back down to the base rate. Not only will taxes not go up, they are scheduled to go down. The reality is that our tax dollars barely covers the staffing for the ER and charity care. No hospital is perfect, but this one answers many more of our needs with financial security and compassionate, evidence-based care than a dying Medical Center ever could. We should be thanking our lucky stars and our hospital district commissioners for our good fortune.

**Cady Davies**