



March 15, 2017

Letter to the Editor: Hospital changes

I am the medical director of emergency services at Petaluma Valley Hospital and the owner of Petaluma Emergency Physicians Medical Corporation, which has provided emergency care at this hospital for more than 24 years. I also served as Chief of the Medical Staff at Petaluma Valley Hospital from 2005-2007.

I want to praise the Petaluma Health Care District and CEO Ramona Faith for selecting Paladin Healthcare as the recommended operator of our hospital. The PCHD Board has performed extensive due diligence during the bidding process – going to great lengths to ensure both the hospital community and the community at large are well served today and for years to come. I am very satisfied with the board's decision.

Paladin Healthcare has expressed to the medical staff that they are: 1) committed to Petaluma Valley Hospital; 2) planning to maintain the services currently offered to this community; and 3) committed to enhancing and even supplementing the services we provide so we can decrease the number of patients that are transferred to other facilities for lack of staffing (nursing and physicians). Paladin is also committed to supporting this emergency group, providing enhancements to our physician staffing and expanding service lines to meet the needs of our community. Broadly, Paladin is committed to keeping emergency and hospital services excellent, strong and vibrant for Petaluma's future.

I also want to thank St. Joseph Health for helping our hospital and community with: 1) a Stroke-Ready Designation (first in the state); 2) a Baby-Friendly Designation (first in the North Bay); and 3) a Leapfrog "A" rating (a national measure of patient safety).

This operator selection process has been long and challenging, with many twists and turns and accompanying rumors and speculation. Change is always filled with anxiety and angst. However, with this proposed transition to Paladin Healthcare, I can confidently assure our community that we will not compromise the quality of emergency, hospital or trauma care. I hope you will support this decision.

Dr. Loren Fong
Petaluma