



## **Franklin County and Maria Parham Health Reach Lease Agreement for Franklin Medical Center**

*Agreement is a critical step in launching efforts to restore essential healthcare services  
to closed hospital's surrounding communities*

**Louisburg, NC (September 18, 2017)** – The Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Maria Parham Health, which is part of Duke LifePoint Healthcare, today announced that they have agreed to move forward with a lease agreement for Maria Parham to reopen Franklin Medical Center in Louisburg. This agreement is a significant milestone in efforts to bring vital healthcare services back to Franklin County and surrounding communities following the closure of the hospital in 2015.

“We are delighted to have reached this agreement with Maria Parham and very pleased that initiatives to bring healthcare back to Franklin County can move ahead,” said C. Boyd Sturges, III, Franklin County’s Attorney and member of the Louisburg Town Council.

According to Franklin County Commissioner and Chairman of the Commissioner’s Hospital Committee Sidney E. Dunston, this announcement couldn’t have come at a better time. He shared, “This community has been without access to local care for too long. Maria Parham has exciting plans for the Franklin Medical Center site, and we look forward to working with its team to relaunch crucial medical services here and advance efforts to ensure the health of everyone who lives in this region.”

In 2016, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners reviewed potential strategic partners interested in taking over services at the shuttered Franklin Medical Center. In October, the board unanimously voted to accept a proposal from Duke LifePoint that involved operating Franklin Medical Center as part of Duke LifePoint’s Henderson hospital, Maria Parham Health, and turning the Franklin County facility into a freestanding emergency department with 24/7 emergency care, diagnostic services and behavioral health services.

“We are pleased by the bi-partisan cooperation of this endeavor,” commented N.C. Senator Chad Barefoot. “The entire Franklin County family and Town of Louisburg, as well as our colleagues at Maria Parham and Duke LifePoint, have worked together to make this possible.”

With the signed lease agreement, Maria Parham will begin the process to reopen Franklin Medical Center as a freestanding emergency department that is part of the hospital, and re-establish the behavioral health unit, subject to receipt of appropriate regulatory approvals. This project is supported by \$10.1 million in funding from the state’s Dorothea Dix Hospital Property Fund grant, as well as an additional \$750,000 state grant for job creation. We also continue to work with the state, Golden Leaf Foundation and other charitable and governmental entities for additional funding.

“Our team is excited to become part of the Franklin County community and partner with the people here to bring needed quality care close to home as well as encourage new job growth and economic development,” said Bert Beard, CEO of Maria Parham Health. “We will begin by re-launching emergency services so those in need of immediate care do not have to risk traveling long distances.

Then, we will focus on better serving the behavioral health needs in the community, which we know is needed.”

It is expected that the Franklin emergency department will open in mid to late 2018, following needed renovations and hiring of staff. The next phases of the project will involve re-establishing and expanding behavioral health services in the community, including re-opening the hospital’s 13-bed geriatric behavioral health unit and expanding the number of available beds and services to include inpatient adult behavioral health. This is expected to be completed by late 2018. According to the most recent community health needs assessment and current population statistics, this is a crucial area of need in Franklin and surrounding counties.

“Teamwork and cooperation helped this project move forward,” stated Louisburg Mayor, Karl Pernell. “The renovations of the facility will provide all of us with a first-class emergency department as well as behavioral health beds.”

In addition to developments planned by Maria Parham Health at the Franklin Medical Center site, Duke Primary Care has plans to establish a primary care practice in Louisburg and Duke Raleigh Hospital has plans to establish an ambulatory surgery center in Youngsville.

Re-establishing healthcare services at Franklin Medical Center is expected to bring a minimum of 65 new jobs to Franklin County in the coming years.

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### **About Franklin County**

Fitch Ratings upgraded Franklin County December 19, 2016 from ‘AA’ to ‘AA+’ on its outstanding general obligation (GO) bonds. The Fitch credit rating system has 10 levels of credit ranking. The ‘AA+’ rating is only one level from the top of its credit rating system. The upgrade reflects the county’s stable economic base. The higher rating (AA+) will ultimately translate to lower interest rates on any new debt the County incurs when compared to the lower (AA) ranking. Better ratings mean lower interest costs for taxpayers. The full press release can be found at: <https://www.fitchratings.com/site/pr/1016735>.

For additional information, please contact Angela L. Harris, Franklin County Manager, at (919) 496-5994.

*Franklin County Government is committed to effective and innovative public services for all Franklin County citizens and businesses.*

### **About Maria Parham Health**

Maria Parham Health, a Duke LifePoint hospital, is a regional hospital in Henderson, North Carolina, serving the people of north central North Carolina and Southside Virginia. As a part of Duke LifePoint Healthcare, Maria Parham offers a combination of Duke University Health System’s world-renowned leadership in clinical excellence and quality care, and LifePoint Health’s extensive resources, knowledge and experience in operating community hospitals. Maria Parham offers a wide range of services and the latest technology to meet the healthcare needs of the community. It is fully accredited by The Joint Commission and CMS. For more information about Maria Parham Health, please call (252) 438-4143 or visit [mariaparham.com](http://mariaparham.com).

**About Duke LifePoint Healthcare**

Duke LifePoint Healthcare, a joint venture of Duke University Health System, Inc. and LifePoint Health (NASDAQ: LPNT), was established to build a dynamic network of hospitals and health care providers. The joint venture, which brings together LifePoint's experience in community-based hospital management and Duke's world-renowned leadership in patient safety and clinical quality systems, is strengthening and improving health care delivery by providing community hospitals the clinical, quality and operational resources they need to grow and prosper.

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