



Rural Health Association of Tennessee
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Tennessee - Rural Health Association of Tennessee (RHA) released a statement concerning Jellico Regional Hospital. The statement expressed support of Jellico City Council for their recent decision to vote “No” in the change of lease from Boa Vido Healthcare to Progressive Health.

On January 24, 2024, Jellico City Council voted down, 4-3, a measure to transfer the Jellico Regional Hospital lease from Boa Vida Healthcare to Mission Healthcare Partners/Progressive Health. Members opposing the change quoted feeling the council was not provided adequate options to consider and that they were being forced into a quick decision.

“I full heartedly support the City Council’s decision,” said Jacy Warrell, RHA’s Chief Executive Officer. “There is resounding agreement that Jellico would benefit from converting to a Rural Emergency Hospital and perhaps a non-profit Rural Health Clinic and/or Behavioral Health Clinic. I applaud the city’s leadership for making this incredibly tough decision in the short-term, for what can be great opportunities for the city of Jellico in the long-term.”

The LaFollette Press published an article January 29, 2024, that quoted Michele Sexton, interim Chief Executive Officer of Jellico Regional Hospital for saying that she felt she “wasn’t heard” at previous City Council meetings and playing into the fear of loss of jobs and life.

To this Mrs. Warrell responded, “Perhaps the issue is less that Ms. Sexton wasn’t heard and more about the Citizens of Jellico not being heard. Jellico is tired of changing owners every couple of years and being constantly threatened with closures. They want to explore Rural Emergency Hospital status and are not interested in a pain management clinic that has been proposed. I hope that more communities see Jellico as an example of working to meet the needs of the community instead of accepting the status quo and feeling of disempowerment.”

Rural Health Association of Tennessee will continue to work with the community and interested parties in developing solutions that meet the needs of the community.

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Rural Health Association of Tennessee (RHA) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization with more than 800 members committed to leading the way to a healthy Tennessee through partnerships, advocacy, education, and resources. Visit www.tnruralhealth.org for information.