MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Al Scott, Chairman

Over the past year, the citizens of Chatham County have heard a lot about the Hospital Authority and its relationship to Memorial University Medical Center. I want to explain how the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, the Hospital Authority, and Memorial interact with each other. These roles sometimes are difficult to understand but each entity has a role to play.

In 1954, the Chatham County Hospital Authority was created and has functioned since that time providing care for all of the citizens of Chatham County. In 1999, the Chatham County Hospital Authority ran the day-to-day operations of Memorial Hospital. However, those duties were turned over to a managing board by a lease agreement. In the more recent years, the Hospital Authority has focused on ensuring that certain services, specifically those needed by our vulnerable population, remain available at Memorial Medical Hospital. That institution, with both the Neo-Natal and Trauma units, carries the brunt of services which are not profitable in most medical settings in Georgia.

The laws of Georgia created a “Hospital Authority” in every county and that authority can vary in the size of membership and terms of office. The size, terms, and any limits to those appointments are determined by the County’s Board of Commissioners.

Once created, the Hospital Authority cannot be disbanded, or in other words, it exists in perpetuity. The Hospital Authority is a separate legal entity and stands alone as its own creature. It can lease, buy or rent real estate. It can borrow money, be sued and otherwise conduct the essential functions of government. Property owned by the Hospital Authority is exempt from taxes in the same way other city or county property is exempt. The Board of Commissioners does not have direct control over the Hospital Authority.

The Board of Commissioners does not have direct control over the Hospital Authority. The Board merely appoints the membership of the Authority in much the same way as Chatham Area Transit works. In 2012, the Board of Commissioners became more involved when it decided to refinance the struggling hospital’s debt and guarantee $163 million in bonds backed by the County’s bond rating. This board rating guarantees a lower interest rate because it pledged a millage rate increase. This pledge means that if Memorial defaulted on the bonds, the Board of Commissioners was obligated to raise the millage rate of every taxpayer in Chatham County. The Commission’s willingness to pledge the County’s money to guarantee the bonds provided a lifeline of more than $20 million in capital in 2012. It also reduced expenses going forward by approximately $4 million annually for Memorial by lowering the interest payments of previous debt in much the same way as refinancing a mortgage saves interest over the life of the loan.

The decision last week to sign a Letter of Intent to sell Memorial Hospital rested with the Hospita l Authority and gave Hospital Authority

Functional and Medical Needs
Clients Encouraged to Register with Health Department

It’s hard to believe that hurricane season is just around the corner. From the beginning of June through the end of November, hurricanes are a threat to coastal Georgia. They can be an even bigger threat to those residents with a functional or medical need who have no way to evacuate if a storm is coming.

The Chatham County Health Department maintains a list of people with those types of needs so that if a storm is heading our way, we can get those residents safely out of town. The Functional and Medical Needs Registry is made up of residents who may require transportation and medical help during a hurricane evacuation and have no other resources such as family, friends, neighbors, or church members to help them if they need to evacuate. Residents must apply to be on the registry and if they meet criteria, someone from the Chatham County Health Department will explain to them, in detail, how and when the Registry will be activated should a storm threaten our area.

Residents who meet the criteria and are put on the Registry will be evacuated to an American Red Cross general population shelter in an inland county. The shelter will be located in a gym or other similar setting and it could take several hours to get to the shelter.

What to do:
• Secure items on your property. Moveable items, such as lawn furniture, should be put away in a secure, enclosed location like a garage or building.
• Items that cannot be put away in storage, such as outdoor appliances, should be secured carefully and tightly.
• Be sure you and your family stay in a safe place during the storm. You could be severely injured by falling trees and other debris, or by water flooding.
• You can get storm and hurricane planning guides for homeowners at stormsmart.org/handouts.

How can I protect my family and our home?
Debris from storms can crash into your home and damage it. Your possessions can also be lost and can end up in waterways – even if you don’t live right on the water – affecting navigation safety for boats.

What to do:
• Remove debris from your property. Be aware of hazards such as broken glass and sharp objects which can put your family or your business at risk.
• Secure items on your property. Moveable items, such as lawn furniture, should be put away in a secure, enclosed location like a garage or building.
• Items that cannot be put away in storage, such as outdoor appliances, should be secured carefully and tightly.
• Be sure you and your family stay in a safe place during the storm. You could be severely injured by falling trees and other debris, or by water flooding.

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urricanes and severe storms bring high winds and rain, strong waves, and storm surges that can damage or destroy your home, boat, or other property. It can put your family or your business at risk, and have the potential to create a large amount of marine debris. Not only can storms damage the environment and property, but it could also lose your own possessions and have to replace them. Do you know what to do to get ready, protect your family and belongings, and help prevent marine debris?

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• Secure items on your property. Moveable items, such as lawn furniture, should be put away in a secure, enclosed location like a garage or building.
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• Be sure you and your family stay in a safe place during the storm. You could be severely injured by falling trees and other debris, or by water flooding.

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Did you know? Many household or boat items can become project for bees in severe storms. These include lawn chairs and barbecue grills, fish nets and sports traps, utility carts and marine equipment, and gardening and spray paint tanks, which are especially hazardous.

This will help your home, boat, and the environment from the impact of severe weather by taking a few simple steps.

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For more information on the current district lines visit: http://www.chathamcountyga.gov/Government/BoardsOfCommissioners/CommissionDistrictMaps.aspx
Corporation of America the right to a due diligence period prior to closing. The Board of Commissioners had no say so in the intended sell. However, as the appointed by the County, and with the County’s monetary backing of Memo-

Lung through its bond commitment and millage pledge, the Commission has a keen interest in ensuring that health care services remain at the highest poss-

able level in the County while protect-

ning the taxpayers from an undue tax burden. I am pleased with the outcome the Hospital Authority was able to achieve in this difficult situation.

Looking forward, Georgia law requires that the Hospital Authority conduct a public hearing and explain the terms of the sale, both the potential pitfalls as well as potential advantages. This hear-

ing must occur 60 days before the actual sale. I believe that the public hearing of the sale of the hospital will go into an Indigent Care Trust Fund administered by the Hospital Authority.

As for the County, Chatham County and its Board of Commissioners have sought non-traditional ways to pro-

vide necessary health care to indigent citizens. By funding both the Curtis V. Cooper and J. C. Lewis Centers, the County, along with its strategic part-

ners, provide non-life threatening health care to prevent an influx of non-insured citizens in Memorial Hospital's emerg-

ency room. These centers, along with a focus on providing mental health treat-

ment through additional agencies such as Gateway Behavioral Health, demon-

strate the County’s ongoing dedication to meet the needs of its citizens in the area of healthcare. 

Medical Needs

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because we want to make sure that those on the Registry are transported well out of harm’s way of the storm. Functional needs registrants are individuals who may need services to maintain their inde-

pendence in a shelter. This includes children and adults with physical, sensory, mental, health, and cognitive or intellectual disabilities affecting their ability to function independently without assistance. Medical needs registrants are indi-

viduals who require support of trained medical professionals. This includes those individuals who may need assistance with managing un-

stable, terminal, or contagious conditions that require observation and ongoing treatment.

It’s important to note that people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and per-

sonal care homes are not eligible for the Func-

tional and Medical Needs Registry.
Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization’s operations.

At its simplest, internal auditing involves identifying risks that could keep an organization from achieving its goals, making sure the organization’s leaders know about these risks, and proactively recommending improvements to help reduce the risks.

For internal auditing to be effective, the organization’s leaders must be open to discussing tough issues and seizing opportunities to make necessary changes for improvement. And the internal auditors must have an independent reporting line to the highest governing body (e.g., the audit committee of the board of directors), ensuring them the requisite authority to access all areas of the organization and know that they will be supported if and when their views differ from those of management.

Internal auditors’ independence and broad perspective of the organization make them a valuable resource to executive management and the board of directors. They ensure that the organization is held accountable to its stakeholders, whether those stakeholders are investors (as in the case of a publicly traded company) or the general public, served by a government organization.

Ultimately, internal auditors add value to the organization by providing assurance, insight, and objective. Internal auditors can save the organization substantial amounts of money and protect its reputation in the marketplace by identifying operating inefficiencies, wasteful spending, employee theft, fraud, and cases of noncompliance with laws or regulations, for example.

They keep an eye on the corporate climate and perform a variety of activities such as assessing risks, analyzing opportunities, suggesting improvements, promoting ethics, ensuring accurate records and financial statements, educating senior management and the board on critical issues, investigating fraud, detecting wasteful spending, raising red flags, recommending stronger controls, monitoring compliance with rules and regulations, and much more! Some people ask to ask from one resource? Maybe for some, but for internal auditors, it’s all in a day’s work. Governing bodies and senior management rely on internal auditing for insight and objective assurance that existing internal controls are adequate to mitigate the organization’s risks, governance and risk management processes are effective and efficient, and organizational goals and strategic objectives are met.

At Chatham County we have a team of internal auditors that regularly look at our departments and our procedures to ensure that we are achieving the best outcomes for our residents.

To see if your child is eligible or to enroll now, call (912) 681-3040 or visit coastalcampaign.org.

Our Enrollment Assistance Partners…

In Chatham County, in-person assistance for signing up or renewing coverage is available from the Campaign for Healthy Kids enrollment partners:

- Coastal Campaign 812 5th St., Savannah 912-447-0787 Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm
- Savannah Counseling Center 400 E 70th St, Savannah, GA 31404 912-661-1290 Hours: Friday morning 8:30am-11:30am
- Locations Accepting Appointments Only Chatham County School Nutrition Planning Council Chatham County Health Department 428 Bull Street, Savannah 912-236-5600 Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-4pm
- Coastal Campaign for Healthy Kids Mobile Enrollment Call for locations. 912-681-1290 (SE HABLA ESPAÑOL) Hours: Monday 8am-4pm, Saturday 10am-12pm

What Is Internal Auditing?

Consensus is assurance, insight, and objectivity. Governing bodies and senior management rely on internal auditing for insight and objective assurance that existing internal controls are adequate to mitigate the organization’s risks, governance and risk management processes are effective and efficient, and organizational goals and strategic objectives are met.

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In Coastal Campaign we have a team of internal auditors that regularly look at our departments and our procedures to ensure that we are achieving the best outcomes for our residents.
I’m loving this new Salsa Dance Class at the FMG Community Center!

WED nights @ 7PM
Only $5 a session!

FRANK G MURRAY COMMUNITY CENTER
160 WHITEMARSH RD
912-898-3320

Chatham County Parks & Recreation

CHATHAM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

1ST ANNUAL BURGER FEST
CELEBRATING THE BACKYARD GRILLERS

SUNDAY, MAY 7TH
10 AM - 1 PM

MOTHER MATHILDA HEARLEY PK.
(200 E. BROAD ST.)
FEES: $25.00 PER GRILLER
CASH PLEASE FOR 1ST PLACE IN EACH CATEGORY

TO ATTEND...BRING YOUR FAMILY & YOUR DOG!!!!

FEATURING OUR FOODIE JUDGES:

JESSE BLANCO
VASILO VALARAS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL VICKI @ (912-652-6784 OR JODI @ (912) 898-3320.

Summer Bonanza Partnership, Inc.
A Chatham County Youth Initiative

The Summer Bonanza Partnership, Inc., is a program founded by Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas. The program will expose young people to local government, cultural diversity, and positive role models. Strengthening academic development while providing state, structured, and fun activities for youth is essential. Summer Bonanza meets once per week on Saturday mornings from 10 am - 1 pm at the Moses Jackson Center. The program fee is $10 per child.

May 27, 2017 • 10 am
Registration begins at 9am - 10am
Moses Jackson Center
1410B Richards Street
Ages 7 - 14