

WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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September 20, 2016

The Honorable Terry Kilgore, Chairman
Southwest Virginia Health Authority
851 French Moore, Jr. Blvd. Suite 178
Abingdon, VA 24210

Dear Delegate Kilgore:

The Washington County, Virginia Chamber of Commerce endorses the proposed merger of Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System.

Our Chamber of Commerce represents well over 550 businesses and individuals. Our members represent industries as varied as banking, education, manufacturing, medical, professional services, and retail. Our members' experience ranges from multi-generation families to start-up businesses.

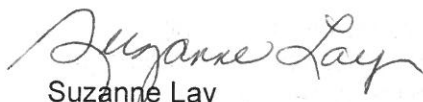
Our community's health needs span the spectrum of routine maintenance, advanced diagnostic and surgical procedures, cancer treatment and prevention, mental illness, and substance abuse. Our health needs also require accessible and affordable options.

We believe integrating Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System into one locally governed health system would provide our community and region great benefits. Our residents already face the challenge of limited health insurance options and this proposed new, integrated system will allow our residents the opportunities to use the physicians and facilities closest to them.

Further, we believe the proposed new system will allow increased resources to be spent on patient care, improving the health of our population, preventive care, and patient education as opposed to non-patient centered resources demanded by the current model. We are hopeful the elimination of duplicative advertising, recruiting, and capital expenditures, will provide enhanced patient offerings in order to make our communities healthier.

The proposed merger will allow our communities to offer and provide qualified leadership of our local hospitals. Our current relationships with both systems give us comfort knowing *local* people will be making decisions *locally*. We urge you to approve the merger.

Sincerely,


Suzanne Lay
Executive Vice President