

MCDH Parcel Tax (Measure “C”): Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Hospital asking for a parcel tax?

Like many small, rural hospitals, MCDH has struggled financially. Measure “C” would provide a secure, local source of additional funding to help the Hospital continue serving our community and providing high quality healthcare to our community.

What is a parcel tax?

Parcel tax is the most frequently used term for a range of possible “qualified special taxes” on local parcels, which can be sought by healthcare and other public service districts. Proceeds can be used for many purposes, though they typically fund specific programs and services supported by the community.

So, what would Measure “C” pay for?

Measure “C” would help the Hospital:

- Maintain local emergency room and ambulance and related 911 services
- Attract and retain high quality doctors and nurses
- Make critical repairs and upgrades to medical equipment and facilities
- Maintain local surgical and obstetric services

How much is the Hospital asking for?

In addition to continuing to work on its own budget and continuing to improve profitability, Measure “C” is an annual tax of \$144 per parcel for the next 12 years, providing the Hospital approximately \$1.7 million in each of those years.

What happens if I own more than one parcel?

Parcels which are contiguous, used for owner-occupied, single-family residential purposes, and held under identical ownership, may, by submitting an application to the District, be treated as a single parcel for purposes of the levy of Measure “C”. Other parcels would each be taxed \$144 per parcel annually. Review your most recent tax bill or contact the Mendocino County Assessor at (707) 234-6800 for additional information.

What about the other taxes we already pay for the Hospital?

Currently, the only tax paid for the Hospital is \$15 per \$100,000 of taxable value to repay the General Obligation bonds issued by the Hospital in 2001. Those bonds helped pay for the Outpatient Services Building and will be fully repaid in 2030. Additionally, late in 2016, the Hospital refunded (or refinanced) those bonds to reduce interest expense and save local taxpayers more than \$500,000.

What if I can’t afford Measure “C”?

The State Controller’s Property Tax Postponement Program allows homeowners who are seniors, are blind, or have a disability to defer current-year property taxes on their principal residence if they meet certain criteria, including 40 percent equity in the home and an annual household income of \$35,500 or less. Additional information is available here: www.sco.ca.gov/ardtax_prop_tax_postponement.html

What safeguards are there for taxpayers?

Measure “C” would require an independent taxpayer oversight committee to review how the Hospital spends all parcel tax proceeds and ensure that all funds are ONLY used for the projects and services approved by voters and NOT for administrators’ salaries or pensions, or any other purpose.

Who can vote on Measure “C”?

All voters within the Mendocino Coast Health Care District – reaching from the Mendocino-Humboldt County line to Elk – will be able to vote on Measure “C”. The last day to register is Monday, May 21st and Election Day is Tuesday, June 5th.

What has MCDH already done to get its house in order?

While other rural hospitals have been forced to close departments or close entirely, MCDH has already made significant adjustments in order to stay open and continue providing critical, local healthcare services. These improvements include:

- **People:** We have added talent to our senior leadership team (Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Compliance, Risk and Quality Director, and Marketing and Public Relations Director), and our hospital-wide turnover rate is below 7%, far lower than the national average of around 20%. New talent, low turnover, and expert leaders all lead to improved patient care.
- **Finance:** We have cut costs and improved our budget (reducing the cost of OB staff and reducing the cost of ER physicians by \$750,000). We won quality awards, including Partnership Health Medi-Cal Risk (100 out of 100), Prime Project to reduce cancer via population health models, North Coast Family Health Center (NCFHC) Quality Award, and Beta Award (i.e. malpractice insurance bonus for great results).
- **Services:** The Hospital received a C-Section reduction award, and NCFHC won a Partnership Health of Northern California quality award for clinic efficiency. Our Pain Management Services were improved and expanded in the Surgery Department and NCFHC. The Hospital expressed its commitment to sustain and improve OB services through staffing, equipment and policies. We also acquired BioFire, a service to improve diagnosing and treating infections, as well as new minimally invasive surgery equipment.
- **Processes:** The Medical Staff Quality Score Card measures an array of core healthcare quality metrics. Our results are now posted quarterly on the Hospital's website. Additionally, patient experience scores have improved to average 73%, and our Community Health Needs Assessment to improve cancer screening is now complete.
- **Outreach and Disclosure:** We regularly advertise for services and providers, and publicize our accomplishments on Radio, Facebook, and other local media. Big improvements have been made to the MCDH website content, with a new feedback option so we learn of both compliments and complaints. In the parcel tax planning process, we conducted meetings with civic organizations and residents up and down the Mendocino Coast over the last number of years, sharing the challenges we face and our efforts to overcome them.