



Hazel Hawkins
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

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PR CONTACT:

Marcus Young 415-505-2524
marcus@wearejsa.com

POLL CONCLUDES MAJORITY OF SAN BENITO COUNTY VOTERS FAVOR LEASE TO OWN OR SALE OF HAZEL HAWKINS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Likely Voters Overwhelmingly Support Eventual Sale To Keep Hospital Open, Expand Service Offerings

March 6, 2024 - Hollister, Calif. - During a special meeting of the San Benito Health Care District Board (District), representatives from True North Research, an independent research and polling firm, and TeamCivX, presented their findings from a recent ballot measure feasibility survey conducted in San Benito County at the end of 2023.

The survey asked approximately 500 registered voters a series of questions pertaining to the future of Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital (HHMH). The results, which were presented publicly at a special meeting for the District on March 5, concluded that the overwhelming majority of voters (77 percent) in the County favor a lease to sale or outright sale of HHMH if it would mean that local access to quality medical and emergency services remained in the County.

“For voters in San Benito County, the concept of lease to buy or outright sale is a non-issue as they both end up in the same place: the sale of the hospital” said Timothy McLarney, Ph.D. of True North Research. Voters also favored the sale if it meant that it would have no impact on their taxes, and that the new operator had experience at successfully running rural hospitals.

As part of the survey, True North Research also tested a series of negative arguments to determine the potential impact on likely voters. The survey results showed that even with multiple arguments against a potential ballot measure, voters remained overwhelmingly supportive.

Voters also gave HHMH high marks for quality (61 percent) and voiced considerable concerns about a possible closure of the hospital if it is not taken over by a well-funded and experienced group.

“Based on these results, the community is united in its goal for Hazel Hawkins to succeed,” said Mary Casillas, CEO for the District. “Our priority now is to ensure that Hazel Hawkins will remain viable in its delivery of quality healthcare to our community today and far into the future. We must focus on a potential transaction partner that has an established track record and resources to support HHMH.”

During the meeting the board also approved a motion to provide a deadline for final proposals. That deadline is April 2, 2024, and is designed to allow the District ample time to prepare a ballot measure for voters either in a special election or for the November Ballot of this year.

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About Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital

Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital is a full-service, public agency hospital delivering modern medicine and compassionate care to the growing San Benito County community. HHMH offers hundreds of health services across multiple locations, including top-tier specialists, a modern Emergency Department, and a state-of-the-art Women's Center. To learn more about Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital and the Hazel Hawkins Hospital Foundation, please visit www.hazelhawkins.com.