



Urgent health care without the wait and expense

Since February of last year, Urgent Care Center Lancaster has been providing emergency health care services at a fraction of the typical hospital Emergency Room (ER) costs.

On average, visitors spend 40 minutes at the Urgent Care Center (UCC), as opposed to sometimes hours spent waiting in the ER — or perhaps even the string of days spent waiting for an appointment with a family doctor.

'Urgent Care' facilities exist all across the nation to handle non-life-threatening emergencies without the congested waiting rooms and bloated bills of the ER.

In the first months of operation, UCC Lancaster was seeing but four patients each day; now they are seeing close to fifteen.

As more local residents learn that there is a cheaper and more convenient alternative to the ER, UCC Lancaster expects to grow busier. If

growth is consistent, Penny is hoping to open three or four more centers in Central PA within the next year.

The UCC opens its doors to those with minor emergencies who cannot be quickly served by their family doctor. For the uninsured, the center offers reasonable pricing with a simple flat rate and the possibility of payment plans, when necessary.

The center provides most of the services offered by the ER, with the exception of X-Rays—although, plans are in the works to obtain the necessary equipment.

Urgent Care Center Lancaster is located at 1821 Oregon Pike, behind Susquehanna Bank and next to McDonald's. Service is available from 12-8pm on weekdays and 10am-6pm during the weekend. The center plans to expand its hours in the near future.

EDITORIAL: Has might again over come right?

News reports that the "*Rail yard move is under way*" bring mixed feelings.

Yes, enabling the expansion of Franklin and Marshall College and connection of road patterns in North West Lancaster are very desirable things.

All that the future rail yard neighbors were asking was for an impartial expert to examine alternate locations and confirm that the dump site was preferable, all things considered.

In the case of the Convention Center Project, all the former County Commissioners and critics were seeking was a professional feasibility study and abidance with its conclusions.

With light shown on the real motivations and mechanizations of would be community leaders John Fry of F & M and S. Dale High and a watchful eye kept on the reporting of the Lancaster Newspapers, perhaps Lancaster will be better and more fairly served in the future.

Convention Center consultant paid \$407,000 plus vague expenses

Excerpted from the LCCCA investigation series by Jim Sneddon

The hiring of Robert C. Hazard III in March 2003 by the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority was, at best, a footnote in a far more significant meeting.

The bulk of the lengthy meeting was consumed by concern that Penn Square Partners was going to drop out of the project. They had found an \$8 million shortfall in what they were able to invest in the new Convention Center project.

Hazard was the second consultant hired that Saturday. The other was Daniel J. Logan of Medford, discussed earlier in this series. For Logan, however, that contract led to him staying as a consultant and being paid more than \$950,000 over the next four years. Hazard did almost as well, collecting \$407,000, over a 26-month period.

Those huge dollar amounts might have raised questions because David Hixson was hired for the elusive executive director position for \$80,000 a year just three months later. But this Authority board was not the questioning kind.

In the case of Logan, virtually no questions were asked about his bills until new board member Laura Douglas was seated in October 2005. She didn't have an opportunity to ask about Hazard. He was already gone. There had been no questions raised about what he was doing and how much he was being paid.

This investigation took an in-depth look at his invoices, hours worked and expenses submitted. It was a paper trail that had to be followed down a rabbit hole into its own "wonderland."

Hazard's invoices were vague. They generally listed one-line subjects to justify the amount of hours he worked. Although there were some smaller hours submitted when he worked out of his Pittsburgh office, when he came to Lancaster he almost always billed for eight-hour days.

Hazard started slowly, but by August, he was meeting with High Industries on drafting agreements between the Authority and Penn Square Partners regarding the use of new funds. He began billing for monthly amounts between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Hazard lists numerous "*executive sessions*" on his 26-months of bills. Some of those "*executive sessions*" are not reported at the monthly board meetings, a violation of the State Sunshine Law if they were being held. If not, why was no one questioning Hazard's bills?

Those records sometimes reveal bills for meetings that did not occur. For example, on Sept. 30, 2003 he lists eight hours for "Presentation to Government and High." But records show he didn't get off the Turnpike at Harrisburg until 5:15 p.m. He then goes to the Holiday Inn to check in. There is no record of any meetings.

Then in June the Authority hires Maurice Walker from Bulls at \$300 per hour versus Hazard's \$200 rate. But Hazard? No one on the Authority board asks. Not a word is said about him leaving or what he did for the Authority and Penn Square Partners.

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