

Hospital execs to visit communities in advance of groundbreaking

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Palm Beach County western communities

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Don't be surprised to find CEO and President Robert B. Hill in your community's clubhouse as Bethesda Memorial Hospital closes in on a spring groundbreaking for its long-awaited new hospital on 441 and [Boynton Beach](#) Boulevard.

Hill and other Bethesda execs will be making the rounds with a PowerPoint presentation starting Monday in the gated communities that belong to the Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations. They don't have to "sell" Bethesda West Hospital, which will have an ER, 80 rooms, imaging services and physical rehab, among other services. The state appeals court upheld its bid to build last January after a contentious court fight by competitors.

But COBWRA, which has been on board since the beginning, is now polling its members on what they want, from room service to Wi-Fi, said Myrna Rosoff, of Aberdeen, chairwoman of COBWRA's seven-member Bethesda West Hospital Support Committee.

Rosoff rolled out their hospital survey at the December COBWRA meeting. She got 49 back out of the 150 she distributed. Aberdeen, Pipers Glen and Jamaica Bay were the only COBWRA communities that stepped up to host the combined presentation and survey distribution.

But Rosoff isn't worried. She attributes the response to how far in advance clubhouses schedule ahead. And COBWRA president Ken Lassiter said his members are just taking their time to get back to him. By late January, he had heard from Platina, Ponte Vecchio and Cobblestone Creek, he said.

"There's no deadline or push. Time will improve the climate for fundraising, so stretching it out doesn't hurt and it may help," he said.

Bernie Rosenberg, president of the men's club in Pipers Glen, where Lassiter lives, said Ken asked him to host the meeting. But he didn't need to be persuaded. "I'm very sympathetic to a hospital in this area. We need it desperately," he said.

He's opening one of the club's March meetings to the whole community, he added.

Bruce Gumpel, COBWRA's treasurer, intends to make the talk a homeowners' association activity in Ponte Vecchio. "Right now, all the hospitals are 8 to 10 miles away," he said, citing concerns about response times by some residents there.

Lassiter is up front about being a member-at-large of the Bethesda Hospital Foundation board of directors. But the coalition's push for a hospital in west Boynton predates his presidency.

"I remember testifying before the state's Special Needs Committee in West Palm Beach when I was president," said Lew Doctor, who headed COBWRA from 2000 to 2003. He just rejoined the hospital's foundation board after a hiatus.

"There [are] so many seniors out here with increasing medical needs, and we wanted more immediate service," he said.

"We wanted a hospital in [West Boynton](#) because it was approximately a half-hour to get to any hospital when you factor in traffic," said Sandy Greenberg, who was COBWRA president from 2003 to 2006 and testified on behalf of Bethesda in Tallahassee.

"We worked on the plans for many years, and the plans are great. The survey just brings the hospital to everyone's attention again," she said.

Marci Shatzman writes about the adult communities in the western suburbs of [Boca Raton](#), [Delray Beach](#), [Boynton Beach](#), Lake Worth and in [Wellington](#). You can read and comment on her columns at <http://www.sunsentinel.com> and reach her at marcibshatzman@gmail.com.

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