



# THE FLOWER MOUND Messenger

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## FM P&Z Passes ER Facility

By Stephanie A. Miller

Staff Writer

Town leaders and residents earlier this week supported plans for an emergency center in Flower Mound.

"We desperately need this in town," Flower Mound resident Carol Kohankie told the Flower Mound Planning & Zoning Commission Monday as it considered two requests for an emergency center owned by Hospital Corporation of America (HCA).

"At the Medical Center of Lewisville, they're treating people in the hallway," Kohankie said. "Even though we're going to have a hospital [proposed for The River Walk development], this one can come in no time and I'm sure we'll need both of them with 65,000 people."

Commissioners approved a request to change current zoning for office, to allow hospital use and a specific use permit for the hospital use for the emergency center to be located at 4351 Long Prairie Road. The facility will be a free-standing emergency department, said Doug Welch, chief executive officer of Medical Center of Lewisville, which is owned by HCA.

Welch said the Flower Mound location will be the first HCA emergency center in North Texas. Hospital authorities with Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine, Denton Regional Medical Center, Texas Health Resources and Cook Children's Medical Center confirmed they do not have similar emergency centers.

Welch said the emergency center will be a treatment-related facility and not an in-patient facility. People will be able to receive treatment for lacerations, broken bones, undetermined abdominal and mild chest pain and similar medical conditions, he said. No surgeries will be performed at the emergency center, which will receive patients via ambulance services. Flower Mound resident Brenda Lentz, a nurse for 18 years, and her husband have lived for 25 years in the Westchester subdivision near the proposed center site.

"I could dance on this table knowing that we finally, finally could have an emergency department in the neighborhood," Lentz said.

Welch said the emergency center would not compete with existing medical offices. "Those facilities already have their niche. Those are more urgent care or after hours ... This is truly for emergency care. This is not a clinic."

Commissioner Dennis McKaige had concerns about noise, but hearing from residents helped.

"At least two residents heard about it and they came out and spoke in favor so the feedback from the neighborhood was positive and it swung my vote."

The proposed emergency center must next receive approval from the Flower Mound Town Council, which Welch said he expects to take place in early April.