



**The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region
The Future of Golden Hill Health Care Center Consensus Statement**

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS URGES ULSTER COUNTY TO
ACT WITHOUT DELAY ON GOLDEN HILL.**

At an open-to-the-public meeting of the membership of the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region, the League arrived at the following position on what Ulster County should do to address the needs at the Golden Hill Health Care Center (GHHCC), the county nursing home.

Members heard from a seven-member committee that studied the situation in great detail and included four past LWV presidents. The committee's work built on work done by an earlier committee that studied the same situation, although at a time when the capital and financial issues were less dire.

That committee and the League's board of directors have both approved this statement expressing the membership agreement at the meeting on September 28.

The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region recognizes that the Golden Hill Health Care Center (GHHCC) is facing a crisis involving a need for major capital improvements to ensure quality resident care and to provide needed services to the community. These improvements must be done in the face of rising operating deficits, insufficient Medicaid reimbursement rates and problematic and unpredictable state and federal monies. The League believes that **this crisis must be dealt with without delay.**

The League recognizes that **there is no solution that will completely satisfy all the major stakeholders** including the residents of Golden Hill, who fear their lives may be disrupted; the employees, who fear their jobs are at risk; and the taxpayers, who fear that steep increases in property taxes may threaten home ownership and economic well-being.

The League finds that **renovating the present facility is not a sound financial or programmatic option.** It would be very stressful for both residents and staff and would not create an optimum environment. **The League also concludes that building a new facility is not an affordable option for the County.** The New York State Medicaid reimbursement rates do not adequately reimburse the costs of a county-owned facility. Even after building new, with all possible revenue-enhancing features, the County would still have to subsidize the operating costs resulting in higher county property taxes or severe cuts to other critical parts of its budget including other medical

and senior services. Also, the County's recent experience in building the law enforcement facility was negative.

Recognizing that the beds at GHHCC are needed in Ulster County, the League **recommends that the County sell the home to a not-for-profit or for-profit entity** that can continue to provide the fine level of care that county residents have been so fortunate to have at Golden Hill.

In the selection of a buyer and in subsequent negotiations, the League recommends **favoring a buyer with an organizational culture that would value and provide the caring environment of the current Golden Hill Health Care Center, and would be willing to hire many or all of the current employees.**

*In arriving at this position, members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region were guided not only by economic and other practical concerns but by the values reflected in the following position held by the **League of Women Voters of the U.S.:***

"The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, **efficient and economical delivery of care**, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, **long-term care** and mental health care.

"Through decades of work in their communities, League members have learned that Americans believe that **fairness and responsibility, as well as access, are important values for any health care system.** We believe that health care reform can only succeed if it takes all these values into account."
