

UPFRONT PEOPLE / UPFRONT PRICES

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Hospitals oppose 'need' law's repeal

BY JON HAWLEY
Daily Advance

The version of the proposed state budget that passed the Senate Friday would expose health care systems operating in the state to more competition — a move hospital officials warn would be detrimental to the delivery of rural health care.

The Senate budget would repeal the state's "certificate of need" law that requires health care providers to get approval from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services before building or adding facilities or major equipment.



SACKRISON

As the name implies, the certificate of need law requires health care providers to prove there is a need for additional services before adding them — the rationale being that excessive or

duplicative health services don't improve health care and can increase costs.

The Senate budget would phase out CON requirements over the next eight years. The spending plan also provides new exemptions from CON review that would take effect in October. The exemptions from CON review include enabling ophthalmologists to license their practices as ambulatory surgical facilities, allowing physicians to operate ambulatory surgi-

cal facilities in collaboration with nearby hospitals, and enabling community hospitals with 200 or fewer acute care beds to offer new health services and buy major medical equipment such as MRI scanners.

State Sen. Bill Cook, R-Beaufort, who voted for the Senate budget and supports repeal of the CON law, describes the law as government overreach driving up health care costs. He said in an email last week that "states with CON laws have

30 percent fewer hospitals, including 30 percent fewer rural hospitals, than those that do not."

Cook called the CON law "one more example of government overreach that may be well-intended, but in reality only serves to curb patient choices and drive up the already spiraling cost of health care."

Hospital officials, including the presidents of local Vidant and Sentara hospitals, disagree with both Cook's characterization of

the CON law and the effort to repeal it.

"I don't think repeal will lower costs," Jeff Sackrison, president of Vidant Chowan and Vidant Bertie hospitals, said in an interview Friday.

Sackrison said he believes the CON law created burdensome steps for providers and it does need "re-vamping." However, the law ensures, he said, rural hospitals can generate revenue to offset costly services like

See HOSPITALS, 2A

Educator thanks mentor

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

When South Greenville Elementary School teacher Michael Bonner made a surprise visit to Edenton last Wednesday, only a handful of people knew he was coming.

Among the few who'd been tipped off about his impending visit to an end-of-year celebration for beginning teachers, mentors and support coaches was White Oak Elementary School teacher Tracy Faircloth. Faircloth served as a mentor for Bonner during his student teaching days at White Oak and has remained in touch with him ever since.

"He had a passion for students from the get-go," Faircloth said in recalling what it was like to work with him and observe him interacting with children in her classroom. "I knew he was going to go far."

And he has. Bonner, who is a native of Perquimans County and a graduate of Elizabeth City State University, saw his name become a household word following an unexpected offer to appear on the Ellen DeGeneres show earlier this year. He won praise from the daytime talk show host for his innovative teaching methods including a rap video he created as a teaching tool to inspire his second grade students went viral on the Internet and caught the attention of DeGeneres and her show's producers.

But it almost didn't happen.

During his presentation at the John A. Holmes media center last week, Bonner shared the story of how he experienced a turning point in his own teaching career

See MENTOR, 9A

PAINT YOUR WORLD PURPLE



STAFF PHOTOS BY REBECCA BUNCH

Cancer survivors and their caregivers walk the track at John A. Holmes High School during the opening ceremony for Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life. Seventeen teams raised almost \$67,000 in supporting the American Cancer Society's search for a cure.

Relay for Life raises about \$67K

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Seventeen teams took part in Friday night's Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life, raising close to \$67,000, according to Lynn Ambrose Knapp, who co-chaired the event with Sheryl Alligood.

This year's theme was "Paint Your World Purple."

The Relay event took place on the track at John A. Holmes High School in Edenton. In a break with tradition, participants enjoyed mild rather than inclement weather and were at the track for a total of six hours, from 6 p.m. until midnight, rather than the normal overnight event Relayers have experienced in previous years.

Knapp said she thought the change in format had worked well.

"I think we had more people that stayed until the end," she said.

This year's Relay was dedicated in memory of Jack Evans, founder of the local Relay's best fundraising effort, Rocky Hock Opry shows that over the past 14 years have raised



One of the most special features at this year's Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life was this Garden of Hope that contained colorful, handcrafted flowers that contained handwritten messages of hope and encouragement from cancer survivors and their caregivers that were created at the kickoff dinner for Relay held at Edenton Baptist Church. Arranged close by were luminaria bearing the name of Jack Evans to whom this year's event was dedicated in recognition of his extraordinary efforts to raise money for a cure.

nearly \$500,000 to help in the fight against cancer.

During the opening events at Relay, his wife, Frances, was presented with a plaque honoring him for his extraordinary efforts to fight a deadly disease that had claimed the lives of so many members of his family.

Evans died of an unrelated illness at age 80 on Nov. 21, 2016.

Bonnita Dunham, a Relay spokeswoman from the regional American Cancer Society in Greenville, recalled meeting Evans during previous Relay

See RELAY, 5A

Bills join DSS agencies

BY JON HAWLEY
Daily Advance

State lawmakers are proposing to replace county departments of social services with new regional entities, a move that would reshape how the state provides child protective services and other programs that protect North Carolina's most vulnerable residents.

Local DSS directors, however, are leery of the idea, warning it could be a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't improve services.

Under proposals before

both the state House and Senate, county departments of social services would be merged into 30 or fewer regional entities by Jan. 1, 2022.

In addition to standalone House and Senate bills, the proposal is included in the Senate version of next year's proposed state budget.

Leading up to 2022, the legislation requires the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services and a working group of state and local officials to plan how to implement the merger. The group would report back to the General Assembly before April 1, 2019, and the merger wouldn't happen without another act of the General Assembly.

Both state Sens. Bill Cook, R-Beaufort, and Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram, D-Northampton, expressed support for the legislation last week.

Cook said the legislation — House Bill 608 and State Bill 594 — is needed to "overhaul" social services in the state after numerous reviews



COOK

See DSS, 2A

West Point cadet to speak at Chowan County Memorial Day service

From staff reports

The annual Chowan County Memorial Day Service will take place at 11 a.m. at the Chowan County Veterans Memorial in Edenton.

Keynote speaker will be West Point Cadet Riaz Lane of Edenton. Before entering the United States Military Academy at West Point, Lane was home-schooled



LANE

proud member of the Sons of the American Legion and the Air Force Auxiliary. In his free time, he enjoys run-

ning — he ran his seventh marathon in March — and spending time with his best friend, role model and older brother, Razi.

Come join the members of American Legion Post 40 as they host this free celebration for everyone to reflect and remember the sacrifices made by our departed veterans for the good and honor of our country.

Town Council mulls food trucks

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

The town council is considering amending the town's Unified Development Ordinance to allow food trucks on private and public property.

A public hearing on the issue that began at council's May 9 meeting

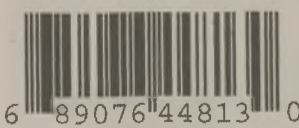
has been continued until a meeting that at press time was scheduled to take place Monday evening.

In a May 19 memo to council members, Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said that town staff has "tweaked the proposed food truck UDO

See TRUCKS, 3A



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