



## **Mascoma Community Health Center's Future**

### **Community Questions asked at the March 18 Public Listening Session Regarding Mascoma Health Center's Future**

1. What are the implications of becoming an FQHC, which seems to create greater involvement with the Federal Government with possible loss of local decision making.
  - While the Federal Govt. has regulations for FQHC's to follow, neither Healthfirst nor MCH will be a part of the Federal Government. MCH employees will not become Federal employees. MCH will remain the same community controlled healthcare center it has always been. Board members will continue to be volunteers (not employees) from our Mascoma community and, by Federal regulation, at least 51% of board members will be patients of the center.
  - In addition to having a local board, MCH will have members on the Healthfirst board, the number determined in proportion to the number of patients severed by both Healthfirst and MCH.
  - MCH will need to report finances and operations to the Federal government, but this reporting will not reduce the services we offer. In fact, FQHC status and the affiliation with Healthfirst will allow us to expand our services to offer behavioral health services, something we have long wanted to do. The affiliation may also help with a path to establish a pharmacy.
  - Does the Town of Canaan support Mascoma Community Health Center?

Yes. The voters voted this year to appropriate \$10,000 to support Mascoma Health Center.

- Are Board members paid by HealthFirst? Is HealthFirst a for-profit?

No and No. It is a non-profit with the same goals and objectives as Mascoma.

**2. What is Healthfirst's financial situation?**

- Healthfirst has been operating for 25 years, operates in the black and has cash reserves of over a million dollars. They are prepared to offer financial support to MCH as we wait for the financial benefits of being an FQHC to take effect.
- The HealthFirst plan generates almost \$400,000 in new revenue a year for Mascoma.

**2. Does MCH have the support of Cardigan Mountain School and also Halo (the behavioral**

**health practice just down the street from the center)?**

- Cardigan is a true partner with MCH having a contract with us to provide medical care to its students. Also Cardigan made a generous gift toward the Dorothy Byrne challenge early this year.
- We have no financial support from Halo, but have an otherwise supportive relationship.

**4. Does the health insurance reimbursement process work well for MCH? What percentage of our patients have health insurance?**

- After some initial insurance reimbursement difficulties, our processes are working well with most claims paid within 90 days.

**5. Are there any other healthcare centers that MCH looked at for an affiliation?**

- There were other possibilities, but Healthfirst is clearly the best fit. They have been supportive and involved with us from our first days of planning. Their practice model and mission in their communities (Franklin and Laconia) is the same as ours. Healthfirst is clearly committed to our success. Others we had discussions with included Mid-State and Springfield Community Health Systems.

Community attending concluded MCH needs to continue to be here in the community and go forward and affiliation with Healthfirst seems the right way to be successful going forward.