

The Honorable Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.  
McLean Piner, Legislative Director  
United States House of Representatives  
407 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Murphy:

On behalf of ECU Health, I am writing to you in support of FY27 Community Project Funding (CPF) for the capital purchase of medical equipment, the training of health professionals, and the infrastructure construction of a comprehensive Gastroenterology (GI) program at ECU Health Duplin Hospital. The cost of this critical project is \$1.2 million and would address a long-standing access to care gap for the people of Duplin County and surrounding rural communities.

For decades, Duplin County residents have been traveling great distances, 60 miles or farther, for gastrointestinal services because of a lack of local options. In fact, data shows fewer than 10% of Duplin County residents requiring GI services receive care locally. Because patients are forced to travel long distances for routine and advanced GI procedures, there is greater risk of diagnosis delays, high volumes of emergency department visits for GI-related conditions, and greater difficulty for elderly, low income, and people with multiple severe and chronic conditions to travel for the care they need.

With a comprehensive GI program, ECU Health Duplin Hospital will have the capacity to provide diagnostic and therapeutic gastrointestinal procedures, including colonoscopy, upper endoscopy, Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), and Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS). Community Project Funding will support introduction of these advanced GI capabilities in the market, which will result in more timely access to specialty care and an improvement in disease progression and acuity of GI-related hospitalizations. With this project, the hospital can complete the infrastructure, equipment, and procedural investments required to safely operate a dedicated comprehensive Gastroenterology program. The \$1.2 million project budget includes procedure room development, advanced endoscopy equipment, and sterile processing upgrades. This investment is essential for converting existing demand into local care and ensuring timely access to services.

This project is vital to the health and well-being of the Duplin County community. Local access to GI services improves early cancer detection, reduces avoidable emergency department visits, minimizes travel-related barriers, and keeps healthcare dollars within the county. As a rural hospital serving a population with elevated chronic disease burden and



---

socioeconomic challenges, ECU Health Duplin Hospital plays a critical role in ensuring equitable access to specialty care. Federal investment in this initiative will have an immediate and measurable impact by improving local access to essential gastrointestinal services and strengthening the long-term viability of healthcare services in Duplin County.

Thank you for considering this request and your commitment to rural communities in Eastern North Carolina.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Floyd".

Brian Floyd, RN, MBA  
Chief Operating Officer  
ECU Health