



Talbot County Senior Task Force

Thursday, February 12, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.
Talbot County Health Department
510 Cadmus Lane, Easton

Attendance:

Nancy Andrew
R. Andrew “Andy” Hollis
Shannon Joyce
Jennifer Marchi
The Honorable Lynn Mielke
Jessica Morris

Lee Newcomb
Michelle Nichols
Carrie Ottey
The Honorable Robert Rankin
The Honorable Robert C. “Bob” Willey

Absent:

Rachael Cox
Julie Lowe
William E. “Bill” Wieland

Guests:

Erin Andrew, *Talbot County DSS*
Ken Kozel, MBA, FACHE, President, *University of Maryland Shore Regional Health*
Father James Nash, *Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (via Zoom)*
Zack Royston, Vice President, *Rural Health Care Transformation and Population Health, University of Maryland Shore Regional Health*
Lara Wilson, MHA, *Director of External Affairs and Community Liaison, University of Maryland Shore Regional Health*

Welcome and Introductions – the meeting was called to order and introductions were made.

Meeting Minutes – the January 8, 2026, meeting minutes were approved upon motion by Lee Newcomb, second by Carrie Ottey and general consensus by the members present.

Update from University of Maryland Shore Regional Health – Mr. Kozel thanked the Task Force the invitation to attend the meeting to discuss senior homelessness and housing insecurity in Talbot County and introduced Mr. Royston and Ms. Wilson. Mr. Royston noted that all patients are given a social determinant health care screening upon intake which is mandated by Medicare that screens for, among other things, domestic violence, food insecurity, housing insecurity and drug and alcohol abuse. The screening helps to identify patients who may be ready for medical discharge, but not ready for social discharge. The University of Maryland Shore Regional Health is looking to partner with community agencies to assist those patients in need without duplicating services. Mr. Royston acknowledged that the senior population often has mobility challenges that are not always able to be addressed in shelters. There are approximately 40-50 patients each year in the region that require assistance from Adult Protective Services and are medically qualified to be able to be served in acute care between

University of Maryland Regional Health facilities in Easton and Chestertown. Mr. Royston stated that the hospital will partner with Neighborhood Service Center for patients needing vouchers for temporary housing which is primarily coordinated through case managers and nurse navigators. While the hospital is aware of unhoused patients, it is not always easy to identify those patients who are on the verge of housing instability. "Find Help" is a comprehensive resource directory which is used by University of Maryland Shore Regional Health. Mr. Royston encouraged the Task Force to review the "Find Help" resource and provide feedback if members are aware of other resources to add. Mr. Kozel stated that the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program has proven to be very beneficial to the health care system and helps to avoid unnecessary ER visits and admissions.

Mr. Kozel stated that the Rural Health Care Transformation Program is a new federal funding source for rural hospitals. All 50 states have applied for funding and each state will receive \$100 million per year for five years. The University of Maryland Medical System has applied for, and been granted, funding which will be used to invest in community-based health and wellness programs, such as the Population Health program headed by Mr. Royston as well as Case Management, Community Health and value-based care initiatives. A sustainability plan for the program will need to be identified after five years.

Mr. Kozel provided an update on the current University of Maryland Shore Regional Health facility (approximately 14 acres) located at 219 South Washington Street in Easton. The new Regional Medical Center construction project, adjacent to the Talbot County Community Center, is underway with an expected completion date of the summer of 2028. Once completed, all services will be moved to the new facility. The University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) has contracted with CBRE for brokerage services for the sale of the facility at 219 South Washington Street which is an asset and the proceeds of which will be used for the new Regional Medical Center. The current facility will be sold "as is" and to date, UMMS has received seven offers (although one offer did not qualify). He stated that the current facility is likely to be demolished and that a majority of the proposals received are for housing projects. CBRE has requested a best and final offer from the six developers all of which will be evaluated. Mr. Kozel noted that UMMS will be considering both the offer price as well as the proposed redevelopment purpose of the property in their deliberations. He noted that he has been meeting regularly with Mayor Cook, Town of Easton and Chuck Callahan, President, Talbot County Council about the project. The Town of Easton has expressed an interest in conducting a community charrette regarding the property. Mr. Kozel expects presentations to be made in the summer of 2026 with a final settlement not until the end of 2028 when the hospital is fully relocated to the new Regional Medical Center. Discussion ensued with members of the Task Force requesting information about transportation to the new facility, demolition of the facility and if the property is being sold as two lots or one lot.

Mr. Kozel, Mr. Royston and Ms. Wilson left the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Mr. Rankin noted that the Town of Easton will need to approve any change in zoning for the redevelopment of the current hospital facility located at 219 South Washington Street. He encouraged the Task Force to consider sending a letter to the Easton Town Council to advocate for the prioritization of low-income senior housing within the redevelopment of the property.

Reports from Subcommittees:

Data:

- Reported that the Days Inn has 17 rooms set aside for unsheltered individuals with five rooms set aside for long-term stays for a total of 22 rooms. The Neighborhood Service Center, Talbot Interfaith Shelter and St. Vincent de Paul currently spent approximately \$109,000 in hotel stays last year.
- Mobile homes, such as those in Hyde Park, offer affordable housing options but may not be allowable under current zoning.
- Task Force discussed inviting Gary Yeatman from St. Mark's, Ross Benincasa from Fello and Don Bibb from the Housing Commission to the March 2026 meeting for an update.
- Consider inviting the Assistant Secretary from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to the April 2026 meeting.
- It was reported that the efficiency apartments located behind Wishing Well Liquors have been sold and may be redeveloped which could result in increased rent.

Case Studies/Good Ideas:

- Handouts provided on Preventing Homelessness, Crisis Response and Permanent Housing.
- It was noted that there is a vacancy for the Talbot County Housing Coordinator position.
- The Task Force may consider another resource with Maryland Rural Development Corporation to provide home repairs.
- Mr. Rankin noted that the Town's Affordable Housing Task Force may consider Junior Dwelling Units (JDU) as a zoning change recommendation.

Project Sites:

Osprey Point, the developer working with St. Mark's is not proceeding with the Lomax Street redevelopment project due to density issues and infrastructure costs to meet the Town code. The developer is possibly looking at other sites in Easton.

Timeline:

Ms. Andrew noted that the target date for the Task Force to submit their report to the Talbot County Council is June 2026. Discussion ensued about what to include in the report such as quantifying need (i.e. the \$109,000 being spent in hotel stays each year) and identifying gaps.

The meeting concluded at 11:40 a.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Talbot County Health Department, 510 Cadmus Lane, Easton. The agenda will be posted to the County's website.

NOTE: The meeting was not recorded in full due to technical challenges.