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William Sands

Ashe County Board of Commissioners
150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640

Dear Board of Commissioners,

The town of Lansing, as many other areas, has been struck by cataclysmic disaster with hurricane Helene causing damages some would have said irreparable to businesses. But the hope I have seen in the faces of my friends and neighbors as they have come together to hold each other up, place blankets around each other, feed each other and get to work rebuilding lives, has been one of the most unbelievable displays of human strength I have ever witnessed.

I am a native to these mountains, and grew up working hard, living from the land and helping and appreciating my own neighbors. The dust, mold, and other allergens that have caused some of the acute illnesses and triggered asthma that has driven folks to seek medical care; this is a 40 minute drive. The medical clinic that I have been proposing now has a home. We do need money to help re-establish walls that have been removed by 4 feet of mud.... But the bones of this building in downtown Lansing are solid.

The rural region of this county desperately needs a free health clinic. I, along with my board of directors, have worked very hard to locate this opportunity and we are hoping that you see the potential in savings for the hospital as well as providers who will have less debt in caring for patients without insurance. There are grant funds available to help with this population, but investment by county, and state is as well necessary.

The tremendous hit that our county has taken with the recent flooding and winds I believe has given all of us pause to understand that we are all vulnerable to unexpected disasters. John Donne in 1624 said "no man is an island", and he was so very right. The establishment of medical services in the rural northwest area of the county can reduce EMS calls for unnecessary reasons, reduce the chronicity of disease by providing primary care to those who do not receive it otherwise, make available primary care to those who

cannot afford it, and reduce the deficit on local emergency room services for care that should be managed outside the ER.

In all sincerity, I do not expect to perform miracles; but it is time that with the recent disaster and so many newly built homes in the area, we must think in terms of how to better spread out our medical services to people who live in remote areas. Clustered healthcare is not equitable.

I am therefore, asking for \$25,000 from the county to assist in establishing Lansing Family Health and Wellness. We are a registered 501(c)3 and would appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Margaret Lynn Rutter, MSN, FNP-C