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Report Charts Path for Trauma Care in NWI

New report details how the region can improve trauma care and provides strategies to increase the number of doctors practicing in Northwest Indiana.

Crown Point, IN (September 18, 2014) – The Board of Directors of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) accepted a new report at today’s board meeting that examined the potential for a trauma center and academic medical center in Northwest Indiana

The report, developed by consulting firm KatzSapperMiller (Indianapolis), found that building a new trauma center in Northwest Indiana would likely cannibalize patients and jobs from existing facilities. Similarly, a separate academic medical center (also often called a “teaching hospital”) is not justified given the number of available hospital beds in the region.

Instead, the report recommends that one or more area hospitals pursue a trauma center designation with the goal of becoming a level 1 or high-level-2 trauma center by 2018. It also recommends that area hospitals partner with the medical program at Indiana University Northwest (IUN) to create a residency program to train new doctors for Lake, Porter and surrounding counties, which are medically underserved areas.

“What we have in Northwest Indiana is a tight, competitive market that is heavily influenced by Chicago, and new facilities would create a local oversupply of beds that would damage existing hospitals,” notes RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna. “That said, we now have a roadmap to enhance medical programs in partnership with local private healthcare providers. That in turn

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will raise the profile of healthcare in Northwest Indiana and address the longer-term problem of people leaving the region for care.”

The report found that the outmigration of trauma cases from Northwest Indiana to Chicago was less than generally believed. The vast majority of trauma injuries occurring in Lake, Porter and the five surrounding counties were treated in Northwest Indiana. The patients the report discovered were leaving Northwest Indiana for Chicago in larger-than-expected numbers were non-trauma cases. The majority of these patients had commercial insurance and traveled to Chicago for treatment due to the perception of better care.

For the residency program, the report recommends that a task force including representatives from area hospitals, the Indiana Hospital Association, IUN and business and community groups be formed to advance the initiative. It points to a collaborative approach between Indiana University and hospitals in the Evansville area as a model for the program in Northwest Indiana.

The RDA commissioned the report at the request of the Indiana General Assembly. It will formally deliver the report to the Assembly in November. A copy of the complete report can be downloaded at: http://www.rdatransformation.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/RDA_KSM-Final-9-3-14.zip

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About the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

Established in 2005 through a bipartisan effort including former Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, key state legislators, and local elected officials, the RDA is quasi-governmental development entity entrusted to make public investment decisions within a regional framework for supporting catalytic infrastructure projects and inducing private sector investment. Years of successful results have made it a trusted and tested partner for growth in Northwest Indiana. For more information, visit www.rdatransformation.com or www.in.gov/rda