



Office of the Speaker **THERESE M. TERLAJE**

I Mina'trentai Siette na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 37th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice, and Culture

Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture Affirms Viability of Ypao Point for New Hospital Amidst Practical Concerns

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (October 19, 2023 - Hagåtña, Guam) - The Legislature's Committee on Health, Land, Justice, and Culture, chaired by Speaker Therese Terlaje, convened another critical hearing to address the pressing need for a new hospital facility on Guam. The discussions focused on the viability of Ypao Point, the site of the old Guam Memorial Hospital (GMH), as a prime location for a new hospital.

Discussion at the hearing emphasized several key factors, including the site's acreage, supporting infrastructure, and the environmental condition of the property which has been utilized over the years as a dump site, including as a staging area for debris after Typhoon Mawar. The Army Corps of Engineers stated that they hope to complete cleaning the site by November 16-20, 2023, with only one pile of debris left for the government of Guam to complete.

While there is a push by the administration for a 100-acre medical complex in Adacao, the practicality and cost-effectiveness of such an extensive project were called into question. The available land at Ypao Point ranges from 25 to 35 acres of usable land, which used to house 230 beds at the old GMH and had development companies proposing to build 300-500 apartment and/or condominium units in addition to a convention center or business park. Even under Matrix's plan, the proposed hospital would require 930,000 square feet for a 300-bed capacity facility, which is equal to just 21 acres if it was on a single story.

Additionally, infrastructure costs for the Ypao Point location are significantly lower at approximately \$80 million less than Adacao or Eagles Field. This savings in infrastructure costs would have significantly less impact to taxpayers and ratepayers who would be shouldering these costs.

Other practical advantages include proximity to residents which according to the Medical Campus Plan, means that significantly more patients are within 20 minutes of a hospital at Ypao Point versus a site in Mangilao by at least 35,000 residents. This is a significant data point supporting response time for a site in Tamuning.

An oversight was also held regarding the progress on a new Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) CDC lab. Responses from DPHSS to an inquiry from the Committee

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revealed that DPHSS is authorized by grant to locate the CDC lab at any site on Guam. Being attached to a hospital was never part of the grant. Additionally, Guam Behavioral Health and Welfare Center is expanding its facility at its current site, just minutes away from Ypao Point.

What is most encouraging, however, is the overwhelming support from the medical community and the wider Guam community for Ypao Point as the location for the new hospital. Testimonies from the Guam Medical Association (GMA) and medical professionals underscore the critical importance of the Ypao Point site. Over 90% of medical staff are located within 10 minutes of Ypao Point, which is crucial for emergency response times. The existing infrastructure and strategic location make Ypao Point the practical choice.

Speaker Therese Terlaje emphasized, "We have an obligation to ensure healthcare services are accessible to all of Guam's community. Ypao Point is the practical solution for a new hospital with the least amount of impact to the current medical infrastructure and to taxpayers and utility ratepayers alike."

While challenges and concerns are to be expected in a project of this magnitude, the practical solution presented by Ypao Point should not be underestimated. This community support reflects a deep understanding of the urgent need for a new hospital and its location.

"If we can address CLTC's concerns the way the Administration proposes to address ancestral lands, there seems to be no major impediment to building a hospital at Ypao Point except for the willingness of the Governor," Speaker Terlaje added.

The Committee on Health, Land, Justice, and Culture is committed to moving this discussion forward, obtaining information from relevant agencies, however, the focus remains on prioritizing the construction of a new hospital to best serve the needs of the people of Guam.

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