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To MV Commission:
Attn: Paul Foley

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I write in regard to the location of the MV Hospital. I was born in that hospital 72 years ago. More to the point, I have gone off since and made a career as a geological oceanographer who studies the interaction of land and sea. History affirms that we are in the "Hurricane Alley" of the Eastern Seaboard. Science tells us that hurricanes will be more frequent and more severe as global warming runs its course. The present hospital site, already on low ground near the sea, is accessed by two causeways prone to overwash and bridge damage. One is immediately adjacent to the hospital, the other is between Edgartown and Oak Bluffs. A catastrophic rise of sealevel, or "tidal wave," often accompanies large storms, especially in confined arms of the sea like Vineyard Sound (recall '38, '44, '54 etc.). Such a wave was over 20 feet high during hurricane Camille on the Gulf Coast. In the past waves even half that size have raised havoc here. Furthermore, hurricane effects are now superimposed on what the U.S. Geological Survey tells us is a constantly increasing coastal retreat and general sealevel rise. According to USGS figures, our south shore is retreating 2 to 5 feet per year.

All indications call for extreme caution in our considerations of site location for a facility as critical to responding to disaster as our hospital. It is most important that the hospital be in a position to aid in disaster rather than being a major contributor to it. Cost and convenience must take a back seat to catastrophe. Let's plan for the worst. The people of New Orleans would agree. The donors contributing so generously to the new facility deserve security of their investment. We as islanders and visitors deserve the best and safest hospital available. Responsible relocation to a safe and central site is the least we can do, and now is the time to do it.

Sincerely,

A. Conrad Neumann, Professor Emeritus of Geological Oceanography