



OP-ED / PRESS RELEASE – TOMAGWA HealthCare Ministries

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SUBJECT: TOMAGWA Announces Deep Expense Cuts / Moratorium on New Patients

TOMAGWA leadership is taking steps to reduce costs so that the ministry can continue to serve as many people as possible. “The demand is so great that the financial resources, as they exist now, cannot keep up,” said TOMAGWA’s top executive, Judy Deyo. “We continue to pray for God’s provision for this ministry and for the people we serve; those who are low-income, uninsured families and individuals who have fallen through the cracks of the healthcare system.”

Faced with an unprecedented increase in numbers of patients, and higher costs for medical supplies and materials, TOMAGWA HealthCare Ministries announced on October 6th, a moratorium on new patients at all TOMAGWA facilities. Today TOMAGWA added even more cost cutting measures such as staff cuts and reductions in hours and salaries, some as much as 33%. The clinic will now operate four days a week, closing on Fridays to save man-hours, resources and utilities. The demand for the clinic’s medical services, in the midst of the current healthcare climate, has forced the clinic’s leadership to make some difficult changes in order to counter the drain on the clinic’s financial resources.

“The clinic’s moratorium is bound to have repercussions if it remains in place for an extended period of time,” said TOMAGWA’s development director and pastor, Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot. “This clinic ministry was founded 25 years ago because a little girl in this community lost her hearing due to recurring ear infections and her family had no access to care. This clinic was founded because a young father of five children in this community died from a systemic infection because he could not afford healthcare. This community bonded together and formed TOMAGWA because tragedies like

those were simply not acceptable. We must come together again to make sure we never go back to that situation.” Rev. Lightfoot said.

“If you are moved by numbers, I can provide those,” said Rev. Lightfoot. “Last year we realized more than 1,000 first-time patients. This year, before the moratorium, we were on track to nearly double that number. If those new patients can’t come to TOMAGWA due to the lack of funding to take care of all of them, they will be forced to go elsewhere. History shows us that uninsured patients tend to either use the local hospital emergency room, or opt for no care at all, when no other option exists. My hope is that this moratorium will not cause increased wait times with non-emergent patients trying to get into the local emergency rooms, or worse than that, the revisiting of the very reason TOMAGWA was founded in the first place.”

“It is our hope that this moratorium will be short-lived, but we will take whatever steps we discern are right and proper to keep TOMAGWA moving forward,” Judy Deyo said. “If ever there was an example of Christians not being immune to difficult times, TOMAGWA’s financial shortfall is it. We know, not just believe, that God is walking through this desert season with us. We trust that He will lead us out of the desert and guide us to the new place where He wants us to be. In the future, we will be better equipped to care for the people who come to us and able to serve the community in an even better way. We are so thankful to God for the faithful friends – volunteers, donors, and others who support us in many ways – that He has placed alongside of us on this journey.”

Deyo continued, “There is considerable talk in the nonprofit world about organizations being ‘sustainable,’ able to ‘make it’ on their own. Unlike for-profit businesses, TOMAGWA cannot charge the consumers (patients) of our service enough money to sustain us. God uses the community, people like you and me, to provide what we need to be sustainable. God’s provision through people is the only way that we can be truly sustainable. Because our faith is in God, we depend on Him. Unlike the government, which is deeply in debt, God’s storehouse is always full. He calls on people, not governments, to care for the poor, the sick, and the elderly.”

TOMAGWA leadership has made additional cuts in expenses, choosing to issue scripts to patients for some of the less expensive medications instead of dispensing them from their in-house pharmacy. Pharmacy hours have been reduced; cuts in utilities usage and other expenditures are being implemented immediately, and other expenses are being carefully combed.

“We have established a crowdfunding site called ‘Pay It Forward for Annabel,’ in an attempt to expand the base of our financial support,” said Rev. Lightfoot. “The site is based on a patient’s testimony, a single mom named Rachel and her seriously ill daughter, Annabel. I encourage everyone

to visit it and share it with as many people as possible. Just go to TOMAGWA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/TOMAGWA) and follow the link or go directly to the site at http://causewish.com/project/pay-it-forward-for-annabel#/project_details."

Community support of this ministry is an investment in the health of the community. Please prayerfully consider a financial contribution to support TOMAGWA. If you would like to walk with TOMAGWA on this journey, please consider becoming a multi-year partner. Call or email Judy Deyo directly, 832-559-5223 or judyd@tomagwa.org. Call or email Rev. Lightfoot directly, 832-559-5220 or stevenl@tomagwa.org. Give online at www.tomagwa.org or send a check to 455 School Street, Suite 30, Tomball, Texas 77375. To tour the ministry, call Tami Sabey, 832-559-5222.

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