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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE \*\***

**Re: Blount Memorial Hospital**  
BLOUNT COUNTY, TN

PRESS RELEASE - Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell will be seeking authorization of the Blount County Board of Commissioners to negotiate a management agreement with the University of Tennessee Medical Center (UTMC) to manage and operate the functions of Blount Memorial Hospital to better serve the Blount County citizens, all while preserving County ownership and local board oversight of our hospital. Blount Memorial Hospital will remain Blount Memorial Hospital.

Having a hospital here in Blount County is very important to the health and well-being of our citizens. Every action I have taken during my time as Mayor and especially these last few months has been all for the benefit of our citizens and of our hospital. In recent weeks, I have worked with and made recommendations to the Blount County Board of Commissioners to improve and/or replace Blount Memorial Hospital's Board of Directors to gain fresh perspectives. Those efforts have been thwarted by the Board and Hospital management.

It is very important to me that our employees and medical staff of the hospital understand any concerns we've expressed are not directed towards them. It has become obvious to me that the management of Blount Memorial Hospital, along with the Board restructuring, needs to be addressed as quickly as possible. With all of this in mind, I've been exploring possibilities to achieve the following goals:

1. Improve the financial stability of the hospital.
2. Ensure the continued access of quality healthcare for our citizens.
3. Restore the confidence of our citizens.
4. Restore a workplace where medical staff and employees are proud to work.
5. Make use of the unutilized services and patient space in our hospital.
6. Preserve County ownership and local board oversight.

Based on preliminary discussions with UTMC that I requested, it will be my recommendation to the Blount County Board of Commissioners to consider the possibilities of a management agreement with the University of Tennessee Medical Center. If I am authorized by the County Commission, I would like to explore this avenue.

Again, Blount Memorial Hospital will remain Blount Memorial Hospital.

It is very clear that Blount County and UTMC share important common ground.

UTMC brings experience and expertise which I am confident can help with the current situation at Blount Memorial Hospital. With approval and guidance from the County Commission, I would like to explore a management agreement that would ensure the success of Blount Memorial Hospital, keep it an asset to the citizens of Blount County, ensure they have access to existing and future high-quality health services, and provide the current medical staff and employees a desirable place to practice and work.

Every detail of any management agreement will be placed in writing for full consideration of the Blount County Board of Commissioners and for full review and transparency for the Blount County citizens.

The reputation and survival of Blount Memorial Hospital depends upon the decisions we make in the next few weeks.

As Blount County Mayor, I have a fiduciary duty to the citizens of Blount County. As I stated in a recent letter to citizens, I have always worked my hardest to serve each and every citizen of Blount County to the very best of my ability and to always strive to do what is in the best interest of Blount County. I take my responsibilities as Mayor very seriously.

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