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Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS"

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Headquarters of the Supreme Lodge

December 11, 2012

Andreas Lycourentzos Esq.

Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity

17 Aristotelous Str., Post Code 10187

Athens, Greece

Minister Lycourentzos,

On behalf of the Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS", we wish to formally register our objection to plans for the proposed reduction in services at the Hospital of Ikaria and its conversion to a "health center". We are of course cognizant of the current economic climate that the Greek government and people are grappling with and realize that the Ministry must do what it can to preserve the welfare of its citizens. However we strongly believe that the Ministry's recommendation to downsize the capabilities of the Hospital of Ikaria will result in additional and un-necessary hardship to the people of Ikaria and its Diaspora.

In 1958, the Pan-Icarian Brotherhood was instrumental in helping build and establish the Hospital of Ikaria through the financial contributions made by its members in the United States and Canada. Over the years we have continued to support the Hospital's capabilities. The Hospital was conceived to meet the medical needs of a population whose access to medical care was limited due to the unique transportation limitations and weather that can delay the timely delivery of medical care. The founders of the Hospital recognized that relocating the sick or injured to neighboring Samos or to Athens added significant delay to the care of the patient and could potentially have catastrophic consequences. These same concerns are still relevant. The lack of a natural harbor and the often unpredictable weather make boat service to the island, even today, a speculative proposition. High winds, which are frequent on the Island, negatively impact air transportation even during the summer months. Moreover the need for medical

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care has grown dramatically, especially during the summer months when the island's population grows dramatically with tourists, both Hellene and non-Hellene, many of whom are elder in years and visit the island to take therapeutic baths.

The current data collected by your ministry also reflects these assertions. (Please see attached documentation) The amount and level of care that the Hospital provides continues to grow annually. Moreover, surgeries and emergency treatment, services that would not be available in a non-hospital facility, constitute a large percentage of the medical services provided. To require patients to board a ship or plane to seek these same services, potentially endangering the life of the patient, seems an illogical and regressive act.

We strongly urge the Ministry to reconsider its plans and ask that it take measures to preserve the Hospital of Ikaria without substantial limitations on its current medical capacities. We hope that you will honor the intent of the founders of the Hospital who devoted themselves to providing reliable and local healthcare for their beloved island. Finally we ask you to continue to support the Doctors, Nurses and Technicians who have made it their mission to protect the people of Ikaria.

We thank you for your consideration and kindly request a response on this matter.

Respectfully,

George N. Koklanaris
Supreme President
Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS"

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