

2010 - 2011 SUPREME LODGE OFFICERS

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Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS"

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Headquarters of the Supreme Lodge

August 11, 2011

Andreas Loverdos, Esq.
Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity:
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Dear Minister Loverdos,

On behalf of the Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS", I would like to formally register our objections to plans for the downscaling of services at the Hospital of Ikaria and its conversion to a modest health center. While we knowingly recognize the current economic difficulties faced by Greece and realize that the Ministry of Health must do what it can to preserve the welfare of the Greek people, we passionately feel this decision to be the wrong direction for the people of Ikaria and its Diaspora.

In 1958, the Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS" was instrumental in helping to establish the Hospital of Ikaria through financial contributions made by its membership in the United States and Canada. Over the years, we have continued to be strongly supportive of its growth and expansion. At that time, the Hospital was conceived to meet the vital needs of a true island community isolated by limited transportation access. The founders recognized that relocating the sick or injured off to neighboring Samos or to Athens would only significantly delay the delivery of timely professional care. Quick access to experienced healthcare service is paramount to patients' well-being. Hours wasted in transporting those in ill-health or critical conditions can potentially have catastrophic consequences.

The plans to downscale are not forward-thinking and a bitter return to the tenuous, mid-century status of care. It is unthinkable to step back away from 53 years of progress and believe that the Ikarian people's healthcare needs will be just as sufficiently serviced. Many Ikarians are aware of countless stories where the assistance of the Hospital of Ikaria proved vital to loved ones. Where will they turn to for aid in emergency situations or tragic accidents? Will commonplace procedures such as childbirth now be required to be sent away because there are no capable physicians and facilities to handle them?

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In addition to the over eight thousand citizens of the island, thousands of visitors – Hellenes and non-Hellenes - return yearly to Icaria every summer. As it is indeed a modern European country that thrives on such tourism, Greece would only benefit from an environment where travelers need not consider alternate destinations because of inadequate access to necessary healthcare. Should these people now be asked to gamble on staying healthy because there is no immediate assistance available if something unthinkable happens?

The Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS" urges the Ministry of Health to reconsider and asks it to take measures to preserve the Hospital of Icaria without substantial limitation to its service. We hope that you will sincerely honor the philanthropic efforts of the countless people who devoted themselves to fulfilling the need for reliable, independent and local healthcare through this Hospital for their beloved island. We also ask your support for the Doctors, Nursing Assistants, Technicians and Support staff who have made it their mission to continue to protect the people of Icaria.

In light of the current situation, I will make every effort to ensure the membership of Pan-Icarian Brotherhood is not discouraged and continues to be responsive in its support of aid for Icaria.

I thank you for the opportunity to address you and kindly request a response on this matter.

Respectfully,

Nikolaos J. Pasamihalis

Supreme President

Pan-Icarian Brotherhood of America "ICAROS"

CC:

Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity:

Deputy Minister: Mr. Timossides Michael fax 2105227877

General Secretary: Mr Polyzos Nikolaos fax 2105227877

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