

From: LaJeunesse, Kristen<Kristen.Lajeunesse@vermont.gov>

Sent on: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 6:47:46 PM

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Subject: Public Comment: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167 2023-11-14T18:47:43Z

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 11/14/2023 6:47:43 PM

Name: Amy Barrup, PT

Affiliation: North Country Hospital

Town/City: Newport, VT

Topic: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167

Comment: To Whom It May Concern: I was born here at NCH and have lived in this community my entire life. I have worked for the hospital for over 24 years and hope to be a "hire to retire" employee. This facility is vital to the health of this community, our patients, and my friends and family. The current state of health care in Vermont is a challenging puzzle, but the viability of our state and this rural community depends upon us all working together to come up with a solution. In NEK in particular, we are faced with the challenges of the lowest socioeconomic status in the state, the highest percentage of Medicaid recipients which equate to the lowest reimbursement rates, and high volumes of chronic health issues and substance abuse. Our small community hospital has fought hard to outlast the financial challenges these unique aspects of our area pose, but we need support from the state level to continue to be a viable option for healthcare in the NEK. The NEK is a tight knit community with an unique perspective on life. I have met some interesting characters over the years, and have to admit that I am related to more than a few of them. I have lots of stories to draw from, but my personal experiences at NCH are the most memorable. When my husband's grandmother was in her last days confined to bed with Alzheimer's, her primary care provider came to her home and sat on her bed with her for a prolonged period of time. She spent time singing to her and massaging her hands to offer what comfort she could. My cousin, who was born with one of the most rare hemangiomas ever seen, was never expected to see her first birthday. Her pediatrician would drop everything when my aunt called his personal phone, and come rushing to meet her at the hospital. He saved her life countless times. When she married in her twenties, he went to her wedding and danced with her. As I approached him after, he was wiping tears away from his eyes as he was so touched that she remembered him. When I had my third child, the nurse practitioner who was the primary care provider for my children called me at home the day after we were discharged to check on us. She herself was on medical leave due to an orthopedic surgery and was sorry that she was not able to evaluate our new daughter herself while we were in the hospital. I could continue to relay countless stories of my own staff and the times that they have gone above and beyond for our patients and community. Whether volunteering time for events, donating much needed materials or equipment, or being available for countless questions and needs in their off hours, our NCH staff are here for this community. It is not just a job to us, and those who live here are not just our patients. Our relatives, friends, co-workers, residents, and visitors are our family. I cannot imagine the impact that the loss of our facility would cost this area, both in terms of employment and the lives of our community members. However, with the current state of healthcare and concerns over its long-term viability, I believe that we all worry that this could eventually happen in this time of uncertainty. Please partner with us to help piece this puzzle together to keep all of our

rural hospitals open to meet the needs of their communities. Thank you.

Post Comment: Yes