

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

Sent on: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 8:56:46 PM

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Subject: Public Comment: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167 2023-11-15T20:56:45Z

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 11/15/2023 8:56:45 PM

Name: Barbara Greenwood

Affiliation:

Town/City: Cornwall

Topic: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167

Comment: Comments on Hospital Transformation Project I am a Cornwall resident and a retired health care attorney, and offer the following comments: 1. I hope that the Board and the consultants will treat comments received in this phase of the transformation project as preliminary. Meaningful comments can be made by the community only in response to proposed, specific options for reform. Please ensure that there is an opportunity for community comment on specific options at a later date. Access to health care ranks as a priority issue for most people in the community. 2. The opportunity for comment at this stage of your process was not well-advertised. For example, I saw but one mention of the project in the Addison Independent; there was nothing posted on Town bulletin boards or in Front Porch Forum. An opportunity for comment can only be meaningful, and the process can only be transparent, if people are made aware of the project and the options on the table and offered an opportunity to comment. 3. Porter Medical Center provides essential medical services to the community. Please do not reduce the hours of or services offered in the Emergency Department. Accessibility to a 24-hour ED is critical for Middlebury and the surrounding towns. Likewise, please do not eliminate Porter's ability to care for patients overnight. I cannot think of a local family who has not had to receive emergency and/or overnight hospital services at Porter. The care I received at Porter a couple of years ago, which involved an ED visit and an overnight stay, followed by transfer to UVM, probably saved my life. 4. Porter Medical Center is a critical access hospital. CAHs are accorded certain deference under federal reimbursement and fraud and abuse laws, because, at least as I have understood it, the feds recognize what an important community resource CAHs are, especially in rural areas, and how difficult it is for them to stay afloat. I urge the Board to take more of a hands off approach to Porter, and give it more leeway to structure its finances and operations as its leaders see fit. 5. I appreciate the efforts that Porter has made to make specialty care available here in this community, and hope this trend will continue. Being able to access such care in the community rather than having to drive to UVM or Dartmouth is important, especially for both young families and the older population. Likewise we are fortunate to have rehab and skilled nursing care available locally at Helen Porter. 6. This state is incredibly lucky to have a first rate teaching hospital and tertiary care center like The University of Vermont Medical Center. I think the Board should do everything it can to try to support its continued operations. I urge the Board to take a more hands off approach rather than second-guessing the operational and strategic decisions made by the experts on the ground. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Barbara Greenwood, Cornwall, Vermont November 15, 2023 barbarajgreenwood@gmail.com

Post Comment: Yes

