

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

Sent on: Tuesday, October 29, 2024 5:02:47 PM

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Subject: Public Comment: Act 167 Community Engagement

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 2024-10-29T17:02:45Z

Name: Christopher R Robbins

Affiliation: Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital

Town/City: Jamaica

Topic: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167

Comment: These comments are being made to bring to your attention the dilemma facing a highly valued community medical institution, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital. Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) recent review has resulted in a number of recommendations that are so impractical from either a medical or business standpoint as to be unimplementable. Grace Cottage now faces the prospect of disapproval of their budget and subsequent requirement to cease operations if they do not comply. The dilemma is that if they do comply, their medical service model that the community values so highly will be disrupted to the point that they might as well shut down anyway. The concerns with the GMCB evaluation of Grace Cottage is that the unique nature of their practice was not taken into consideration and the medical consequences of the financially oriented finding was not considered. Grace Cottage's family health medical service model, the medical equivalent of a business model, differs from that of other regional hospitals and probably from those of the entire state. Unlike other hospitals, Grace Cottage is a thriving family health practice with a limited number of inpatient beds for rehabilitative or emergency transition care. This model is well integrated with other facilities of the Dartmouth ACO. Unsurprisingly given the number of low income families served, Grace Cottage often operates at a deficit. But annual donations have make up this deficit. The medical need for this transition care will not go away if Grace Cottage's does not provide it, It will just be dispersed to other less cost effective facilities that do not enjoy as good records of medical outcomes. And, to the extent that Grace Cottage's impatient costs are offset by charitable contributions, providing similar care at alternat facilities will increase the costs to the state. Closing Grace Cottage's emergency room will shift and similarly increase costs as well put a number of patients more than an hour's travel time away from the next nearest emergency room. Loss of the pharmacy will require an additional 40 mile roundtrip to the next nearest pharmacy at the cost of two or three gallons of gasoline, a real financial burden for a number of patients. Rather than saving medical costs, implementing GMCB. recommendations will be diminished medical care and its cost increased. Grace Cottage serves another state priority, meeting the Governor's goal of bringing people to Vermont. Grace Cottage is a major population draw to the community it serves, My town, Jamaica, has a growing number of second homeowners that have elected to retire here. The area has an even larger number of vacation homeowners that the state wants to become permanent residents. And, in Jamaica at least, we are enjoying some limited success. With the prospect of the DVFiber Communications Union District bringing broadband internet to the under-served areas of our town within the next two years, we anticipate the number of vacation homeowners that elect to stay to increase and the region to become an increasingly popular draw for remote workers. The availability of high quality health services will be major factor in decisions to move here and existing retirees ability to remain. In our case, loss of

Grace Cottage will force us to relocate and we are hardly alone. Grace Cottage's role in decisions to move here is a major factor that should be taken into consideration in any recommendations affecting its operations. I respectfully request that you reconsider your findings of their Grace Cottage review to take into account the medical consequences and community impact of your recommendations.

Post Comment: Yes