



Town of Jay Vermont

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October 14, 2024

Dear Board of Directors

We the Selectboard of the Town of Jay, Vermont, are writing this letter in support of maintaining North Country Hospital as our primary health care facility and ask that you reject the recommendations set forth by Dr. Bruce Hamony from the consulting firm of Oliver Wyman in his Health Care Restructuring Plan.

Once again, it appears to those of us involved in local government that the Northern area of the State, primarily the communities served by North Country Hospital are being inequitably treated in terms of funding, environmental concerns and now the providing of health care services. Over the years, the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont has become the “dumping ground” for unpopular social, environmental and economic policies; we were forced to house the largest correctional facility in the State, have become the solitary solid waste facility in the State and now we are being singled out to be the solution to the mental health crisis prevalent throughout the rest of the State.

Our region is home to a large, ageing, senior population who already find it difficult to access adequate health care and must travel a minimum of 2 hours to obtain the services of specialists so easily accessed by our southern communities. This proposal would also guarantee that our residents would now have to travel that same distance to have their basic medical needs met. North Country Hospital is an essential component to the health and safety of our citizens. Access to a sufficient and skilled emergency care services as well as in-house medical care saves lives. If Dr. Hamony’s plan is realized, it is a guaranteed outcome that people from our area WILL die because of the long drive to receive emergency medical treatment or not being given the suitable stabilization treatment needed prior to being transported to a specialized facility. Approving Dr. Hamony’s restructuring plan would be irresponsible on the part of the decision makers and detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of their constituents.

North Country Hospital in Newport, Vermont is an essential part of our community’s economic structure and plays an important role in the overall health and well-being of our community members. It is presently one of the largest employers in Orleans County. If Dr. Harmony’s recommendations regarding the future of North Country Hospital are carried out, not only would it directly impact our large ageing population’s ability to access

adequate health care services but would also discourage investors, potential home owners, and businesses from relocating to our area because of the lack of easily accessible and adequate health care. We are also greatly concerned about the negative economic impact the proposal would have on our other major employer, Jay Peak Resort, who frequently uses the services provided by North Country Hospital. Without access to adequate health care and sufficient emergency services, the definite likelihood of losing clientele and staff would be devastating to the future of the Four Seasons Resort.

It is our understanding that the recommendations regarding North Country Hospital were made based on inaccurate data and unsubstantiated assumptions. We believe there was no consideration given by Dr. Harmony to the devastating effect his recommendations would have on the towns serviced by North Country Hospital. He not complete a full impact analysis to determine the potential negative consequences and effects his recommendations would have on the the economic, social and cultural aspects of our communities.

We implore you to reject Dr. Hamony's Health Care Restructuring Plan and consider alternative ways to bolster and expand the quality, affordability and accessibility to health care services for our rural citizens residing in the Northeast Kingdom who are serviced by North Country Hospital.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

The Town of Jay Selectboard: Le-Ann Tetrault (chair) David Sanders & Tara Morse.