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**Sent on:** Monday, October 14, 2024 1:37:45 PM

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**Subject:** Public Comment: Act 167 Community Engagement

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

**Submit Time:** 2024-10-14T13:37:42Z

**Name:** Rev. Martha B. Peck

**Affiliation:**

**Town/City:** Newport

**Topic:** Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167

**Comment:** October 14th Dear Care Board, We need your help in correcting the harm done to our community by the release of the Green Mountain Care Board's report concerning the repurposing of North Country Hospital. We have been told that the recommendations from Dr. Hamory do not mean the closure of our hospital. But if we eliminate inpatient care, a fully staffed emergency room, and obstetrical care, it's hard to argue we would still have a hospital. "Repurposing" is a euphemism. North Country is the only hospital in the state that qualifies by every measure as a critical access facility. Many people here do not have reliable transportation and are already an hour away from basic medical care. Our hospital is also the largest employer in the county, and closure would devastate our already challenged economy. The release of this report and its spin in the media has made it impossible for the hospital to recruit new staff, and has caused much worry among local residents. Dr. Hamory's report contained inaccuracies related to the number of births per year, the number of ER visits per year, and the current financial health of the organization. He was made aware of these flaws before his report was released, but did not correct them or adjust his recommendations accordingly. We share the concern about rising medical costs and believe that the Care Board sincerely wants to find ways to offer affordable and equitable health care for Vermonters. What we need now from the Care Board is a public declaration that North Country will not need to close or radically downsize in the near future. Please correct this disastrous public perception, so that we can continue taking care of people here. Sincerely yours, Rev. Martha B. Peck Newport VT

**Post Comment:** Yes