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Sent on: Monday, October 28, 2024 2:13:56 PM

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Subject: Public Comment: Act 167 Community Engagement

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

Submit Time: 2024-10-28T14:13:52Z

Name: Patrick Flood

Affiliation: n/a

Town/City: Woodbury

Topic: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167

Comment: The Oliver Wyman report findings are stark: our healthcare system is broken and at severe risk of failing further. We cannot afford the hundreds of millions of dollars it will cost to support the status quo. Without immediate and major changes, costs will continue to grow and the lack of access will worsen. If we do not make dramatic changes soon, hospitals will face bankruptcy. The supporters of the status quo are already trashing the report, stating that we can't possibly take the recommended steps. But in effect what they are really saying is, too bad, Vermonters, we have to keep raising your insurance rates and taxes to pay for a bloated hospital system. The report lays out in great detail how to redesign our health care system to make it affordable and to provide Vermonters with the care they need. Yes, there will be significant changes and there will be difficult decisions. But those changes and decisions should have been made years ago, when it would have been easier. Many people have been advocating for these types of changes for years. They are not rocket science. In basic terms, they boil down to three major changes: Move dollars into prevention and primary care, and fund community services like mental health and home health to keep people healthy and out of the hospital. Prior studies have shown that a large portion of expensive hospital funding — 30% or more in some Vermont hospitals — is for avoidable care that could and should have been provided in community settings. Put real limits on hospital spending. There are several methods in the report to accomplish this. Re-structure our hospital system to make it more efficient. What the system eventually looks like remains to be seen, but access to health care will improve, not worsen. While the report lays out very specific recommendations, there will need to be a very public debate among Vermonters about which recommendations will serve us best. The final plan could look significantly different than the report as submitted but the key principles of the plan are critical. It is also important to note that no doctor, nurse, lab tech or imaging tech is likely to be out of work. There is plenty of work to do and there is already a shortage of clinical personnel. It is possible that some highly paid administrators will no longer be needed as hospitals are restructured. Others may find themselves working in a different setting, such as a health clinic or home health agency, but there is plenty to do. This report gives Vermont the opportunity to take a thoughtful, data driven approach to re-structuring its health care system. We can take this opportunity and build the health care system we want, affordable, accessible and high quality. Or, we can let our system continue to deteriorate, clinging to the status quo, until hospitals begin to go bankrupt and implode and take the rest of the system with them. This is the only approach that will bring down costs while expanding access. Will the Scott administration and the hospitals show leadership and adopt these recommendations, or will they fight to maintain the status quo? The path to a highly functional, affordable, accessible and person-centered health care system has been laid before us? Do we have the courage and wisdom to implement it?

Post Comment: Yes