

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

**Sent on:** Saturday, September 28, 2024 1:40:15 PM

**To:** LaJeunesse, Kristen<Kristen.Lajeunesse@vermont.gov>; Watson, Hilary<Hilary.Watson@vermont.gov>; Melamed, Marisa<Marisa.Melamed@vermont.gov>; Barrett, Susan<Susan.Barrett@vermont.gov>; Foster, Owen<Owen.Foster@vermont.gov>; Holmes, Jessica A.<Jessica.A.Holmes@vermont.gov>; Lunge, Robin<Robin.Lunge@vermont.gov>; Murman, David<David.Murman@vermont.gov>; Walsh, Thom<Thom.Walsh@vermont.gov>; Berube, Alena<Alena.Berube@vermont.gov>; AHS - Health Care Reform<AHS.HealthCareReform@vermont.gov>

**Subject:** Public Comment: Community Engagement: Hospital Sustainability and Act 167 2024-09-28T13:40:10Z

A new GMCB Public Comment has been received.

**Submit Time:** 9/28/2024 1:40:10 PM

**Name:** William Peck, MD

**Affiliation:** retired North Country Hospital physician (34 years on staff); current North Country Hospital Board member

**Town/City:** Newport, Vermont

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

**Comment:** We Vermonters who live in smaller rural towns are particularly concerned with the recommendation made by the consulting firm hired by the GMCB, Oliver Wyman, to close down four of our hospitals as a part of an initiative to curtail the costs of medical care in our state. Living in Newport, Vermont's most isolated small city, I am especially alarmed that North Country Hospital is one of the four hospitals that has been advised to "re-purpose", i.e. to close down. The consulting firm's report to the GMCB is largely based on facts and figures, data and dollars... quantifiable numbers. Although the consultant made an effort to solicit personal, community commentary on how the closure of rural hospitals might impact the quality of health care and the vitality of their areas, the input they received has been largely ignored. Our community's concerns about the adverse impacts of the closure of North Country Hospital, such as the loss of high-level emergency care, the loss of obstetric care, the loss of close-to-home inpatient care, and the difficulties of seeking care at distant facilities or through using electronic, "virtual" providers, were dismissed. Also dismissed were those concerns voiced by our community that closure of our hospital would have a tremendous adverse effect on the economy and the overall vitality of our area. I would urge the members of the Green Mountain Care Board to consider these non-quantifiable but absolutely critical human concerns as they move forward in their task of curtailing the cost of medical care and assuring easy access to high quality care for all Vermonters. Simply closing four of our hospitals is a facile, "quick fix", one that will cause both immediate and long-term detrimental effects on Vermont's smaller communities and the the health needs of the people who live in them. Oliver Wyman has suggested a way to "fix the broken system"; The Green Mountain Care Board should find a better way.  
Sincerely, Bill Peck

**Post Comment:** Yes