

First and foremost, I send greetings and wishes for good health.

My focus this year has been on writing short story memoirs. It has been both challenging and rewarding.

It is fair to say that I have a different perspective and viewpoint about Vermont's health care system than that supported by the GMCB since 2011. In short, the cost of health care is not sustainable and in my opinion, the focus of the Board has been greatly misplaced with almost blind support to our hospital system while the plight of the consumer has been greatly neglected. I know broad generalizations can be misplaced but I will stand behind my basic contention.

I am writing to simply focus attention on one important issue - - the fate of the proposed inpatient psychiatric facility in central Vermont. While I have called this initiative one of the few creative bright spots in the work of the GMCB, I have been and continue to be dubious that this project will ever be realized. I was staggered beyond belief when the UVM Medical Center, after a year of planning and the expenditure of more than a million planning dollars, proposed a \$150 million dollar price tag last February. I believe the Board was staggered as well but once again, in its actions, or lack of actions, confirmed my contention that UVM Medical Center is nothing short of "masters of the health care universe in Vermont." This has occurred because the Board has lacked regulatory backbone and because UVMMC has and uses its political clout. I would call the UVM Medical Center proposal nothing short of absurd and insulting.

This issue of concern at this moment is that while we all acknowledge that the pandemic has greatly impacted all aspects of health care in Vermont, the need for the inpatient unit remains acute. It is my belief that you granted UVM Medical Center a open check-book with \$21 million with no specific timelines or agreements over acceptable progress. In short, I presume that there is currently no plan, no timeline or no punishment for poor and/or unacceptable performance. That said, where is the remaining \$20 million, who decides how it gets spent and whether or not UVMMC should return these funds given their poor performance to date? In fact, some out-of-state organizations might offer help and I suspect they will not presume spending \$150 million.

The UVM Medical Center has given new meaning to the term "chutzpah." With lax oversight, they have run up astounding reserves over a period of years and now are using the old threat of having to reduce services if their current budget proposals are not increased over some modest reductions imposed by the GMCB. Is there an implant for backbone?" I hope so.

Thank you for your review.

Ken Libertoff