

Porter Medical Center

May 25, 2023

Green Mountain Care Board  
Attention: GMCB Members  
144 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Members of the Green Mountain Care Board,

As President and COO, I wish to communicate concern with the Board's FY24 budget guidance. Its essentially flat statewide hospital growth rate requirement will compromise our mutually agreed focus on hospital stabilization. It also comes at a time when Vermont hospitals are struggling to manage unprecedented operating pressures and patient care volumes while creating paths to sustainable futures in our communities.

At Porter, as in other Vermont hospitals, our operating environment is in great flux. We are caring for patients at higher acuities and volumes than we've cared for in the past. While we are blessed to have our Helen Porter Nursing and Rehabilitation skilled nursing facility to decant post-acute and long-term care patients from our hospital (as well as other Network hospitals), that capacity is limited and so acute patients often spend their hospital stay in an Emergency Department hallway. Expense inflation and workforce challenges persist; Porter remains dependent on approximately 70 expensive agency staff in its care settings.

It is important to ensure that our FY24 budget guidance recognizes and supports a focus on stabilization while our hospitals manage to equilibrium in this environment. Even while facing these pressures, our hospitals are innovating and implementing models supportive of both financial sustainability and our communities' needs. Among our many efforts at Porter are:

- Investments in process improvement training and actions to improve core processes and value;
- Deployment of a team-based primary care model, including an ambulatory pharmacist and enhanced mental health supports, to support patients' specific needs;
- Building upon pipeline training program partnerships with Patricia Hannaford Career Center and Vermont State University; and,
- Standardizing and integrating care and business processes across UVMHN to enhance value.

We appreciate the Board's consideration of the FY24 budget guidance. Porter Medical Center and the hospital community is doing the right work and need assurance of appropriate financial support. Failing that, we have real concerns about maintaining core services that both serve community needs AND support the improved value we need to achieve stability and strive toward sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration.



Thomas R Thompson  
President / COO