

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2022

Dr. Saum Sutaria
Chief Executive Officer
Tenet Healthcare



Dear Dr. Sutaria:

We write about a matter of grave importance to our constituents in the MetroWest region of Massachusetts — Tenet Healthcare’s (Tenet) proposed closure of the outpatient medical oncology and radiation oncology departments at MetroWest Medical Center (MWMC). We have serious concerns about this proposal and urge you to reconsider the closure.

MWMC provides critical local care to the residents of MetroWest, an area with some of the fastest growing and most rapidly diversifying populations in the state. Framingham Union Hospital, the centerpiece of MWMC, is especially important to lower income residents in south Framingham — many of whom are Black, Brazilian-American, or both — who rely on the accessible lifeline of a community hospital and may not have the resources to readily travel farther for medical care. The loss of local oncology care in MetroWest represents an added burden to patients and families already facing the fear and stress of a cancer diagnosis.

Further, Tenet’s decision to terminate these services will exacerbate health inequities for the most vulnerable patients. The 2018 MWMC Cancer Program Annual Report tracked a total of 526 cases for 2017.¹ Redirecting patients to Tenet-owned St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, a 45-60 minute drive from many parts of MetroWest, could present an insurmountable obstacle to patients who might need care throughout a week and are constrained by time, money, access to transportation, or caregiver availability. This reduction of care could also place additional strain on St. Vincent Hospital, as well as other community medical centers in nearby Marlborough, Milford, and Newton that the COVID-19 pandemic has hit hard.

Tenet’s proposed closure comes on the heels of other concerning events at MWMC, including the announced closure of inpatient sleep medicine services, a computer network issue that temporarily halted the emergency department’s intake of patients and ambulances,² and the elimination of in-person interpretation services in a city where nearly 40 percent of households

¹ *MWMC Cancer Program Annual Report* (2018), <https://www.mwmc.com/docs/librariesprovidermetrowest/default-document-library/metrowest-annual-report-2018-ada.pdf>.

² *After service, personnel changes, what's going on at MetroWest Medical Center?*, MetroWest Daily News (May 5, 2022), <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/story/news/2022/05/05/framingham-ma-hospitals-leadership-service-changes-raise-questions/9614303002/>

primarily speak a language other than English.³ On top of this, the medical center has experienced alarming turnover in its senior leadership, including the departure of three CEOs in less than four years.⁴ We are concerned that Tenet's recent actions could lead to further departures of medical staff, reduce community confidence in the medical center, and compromise the center's ability to provide the highest quality of care. All the while, Tenet has reported more than \$3.44 billion in 2021 profits and \$888 million in profit in the first quarter of 2022.⁵ And last year alone, your compensation totaled more than \$21 million and the compensation for Tenet's Vice President and CFO exceeded \$9 million.⁶

The proposed closure of the outpatient medical oncology and radiation oncology departments at MWMC, the string of recent decisions affecting MWMC, and the extraordinary compensation that you and other top Tenet executives have earned raise serious questions about Tenet's commitment to MetroWest residents and its prioritization of resources. To address these concerns, we request written answers to the following questions by Friday, July 8th:

1. Why has Tenet proposed to close the outpatient medical oncology and radiation oncology departments at MWMC?
2. How many patients currently receiving cancer care at MWMC will be affected by the proposed closure?
3. How would closing the facility at MWMC affect Tenet's net income and net expenses at MWMC? Please provide specifics on the expected changes in income and expenses.
4. As part of this proposed closure, what steps would Tenet take to ensure continuity of care for current oncology patients at MWMC? How will Tenet ensure access to oncology care for current and future patients in MetroWest, especially those who may not be able to travel to St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester?
5. What are Tenet's plans for long-term investment in MWMC to ensure it can remain a reliable source of community-based healthcare in MetroWest?
 - (a) How much of Tenet's more than \$3.4 billion in 2021 profits or \$888 million 2022 first quarter profits were reinvested into MWMC?
 - (b) Are there other operational changes or service cuts that Tenet is considering at MWMC? If so, what are they?

³ *MetroWest Medical Center Moves To Phone & Video Interpreters; Lays Off Staff*, Framingham Source (Apr. 14, 2022), <https://framinghamsource.com/index.php/2022/04/14/metrowest-medical-center-moves-to-phone-lays-off-staff/>.

⁴ *After service, personnel changes, what's going on at MetroWest Medical Center?*, MetroWest Daily News (May 5, 2022), <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/story/news/2022/05/05/framingham-ma-hospitals-leadership-service-changes-raise-questions/9614303002/>

⁵ Press Release, Tenet Reports Strong Fourth Quarter and FY 2021 Results (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://investor.tenethealth.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2022/Tenet-Reports-Strong-Fourth-Quarter-and-FY-2021-Results-Announces-Plan-to-Retire-700-Million-of-Debt-Provides-Detailed-2022-Financial-Outlook/default.aspx>; Press Release, Tenet Reports First Quarter 2022 Results (Apr. 20, 2022), <https://investor.tenethealth.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2022/Tenet-Reports-First-Quarter-2022-Results-Retired-over-800-Million-of-Debt-to-Date-in-2022-Maintains-2022-Adjusted-EBITDA-Outlook/default.aspx>.

⁶ *Tenet CEO's compensation jumps to \$21M*, Becker Hospital Review (Mar. 28, 2022), <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/compensation-issues/tenet-ceo-s-compensation-jumps-to-21m.html#:~:text=Tenet%20Healthcare%20CEO%20Saum%20Sutaria,Dallas%2Dbased%20company%20March%202025.>

We hope that Tenet will reconsider the proposed closure and instead reinvest in MetroWest Medical Center to provide the highest quality care to patients throughout the region. Thank you for your time and immediate attention to this matter.

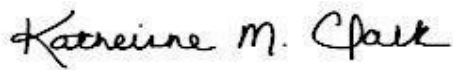
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Katherine Clark
Assistant House Democratic Leader

CC:

Carolyn Jackson, Interim Chief Executive Officer, MetroWest Medical Center
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Charles Sisitsky, Mayor of Framingham
Karen Spilka, Senate President, Senator for the Second Middlesex and Norfolk District
Carmine Gentile, 13th Middlesex State Representative
Danielle Gregoire, 4th Middlesex State Representative
Jack Patrick Lewis, 7th Middlesex State Representative
Maria Robinson, 6th Middlesex State Representative