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May 20, 2020

Michael A. Slubowski
President and Chief Executive Officer
Trinity Health
20555 Victor Parkway
Livonia, MI 48152-7018

Dear Mr. Slubowski,

I write about a matter of utmost importance to my constituents in western Massachusetts — the proposed closure of 74 psychiatric beds at Providence Behavioral Health Hospital in Holyoke, Massachusetts operated by Mercy Medical Center. I urge you to reconsider this proposed closure.

The inpatient behavioral health beds that Providence Hospital currently provides service a large number of western Massachusetts residents who have few other options for care. These inpatient behavioral health beds represent roughly forty percent of adult inpatient beds in the region, and one-hundred percent of the pediatric behavioral health beds in western Massachusetts. They provide a lifeline to critical mental health care. Trinity Health's proposed solution — for patients and their families to drive to Connecticut or Vermont for care, or to rely on other, already-overburdened providers in western Massachusetts — raises serious concerns and could present an insurmountable burden to many patients.

In addition to reducing access to critical inpatient behavioral health services, the proposed closure would also eliminate more than two-hundred health care jobs. Residents of western Massachusetts — like those across the Commonwealth and the nation — will increasingly need access to mental health care as we face new and daunting challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We urgently need our health care workers to remain on the frontlines.

And the need for inpatient behavioral health beds is clear, as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has documented. On May 15, 2019, DPH deemed the 74 inpatient behavioral health beds "necessary" for the region. I urge you to take a close look at the DPH's findings, and to keep the 74 inpatient beds open at Providence Hospital.

Michael A. Slubowski

May 21, 2020

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I appreciate your thorough review of this matter. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Melissa Olesen in my Springfield office at (413) 302-2739.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "M".

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator