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To: [Long, Kelly](#); [LaVere, Matt](#); [Supervisor Gorell](#); [Supervisor Parvin](#); [Lopez, Vianey](#)
Cc: [Johnson, Sevet](#); [ClerkoftheBoard](#); [Burgh, Jeff](#); [Zimmerman, Barry](#)
Subject: Santa Paula Hospital - Reduction in Services
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Dear Chair Long and Supervisors LaVere, Gorell, Parvin and Lopez,

First, I would like to apologize for not being available when my name was called to speak this morning in public comments. My work schedule has been challenged by a family member's health issue that is taking a toll on everyone in my family.

I intended to speak about the elimination of ICU and OB services at Santa Paula Hospital because in reality what you are being asked by the Health Care Agency is to approve an underhanded, manipulation of the County's budgeting process that totally usurps the policy making authority of the Board of Supervisors on one of the most important services the County provides to its residents -- health care and hospital services to residents in the Santa Clara Valley.

What you should understand is that the budget proposal before you represents the next nail in the coffin of Santa Paula Hospital, and vital health care services for residents in the Santa Clara valley.

The report you received from Barry Zimmerman contains many distortions, half-truths and untruths. Those best to challenge this report are those closest to the work being done at the hospital, so I refer you to the letter sent to you Supervisors dated May 22, 2024, signed by the 15 Santa Paula ICU Staff, those who know best what is happening in the hospital.

From where I sit it is obvious that the unstated objective, hidden in the budget is the elimination of Santa Paula Hospital in its entirety..... death by 1,000 cuts. This has been going on since at least 2019. At that time I met with Mr. Folley, a numbers guy who was brought in to head up the hospitals. His first attack was on the SPH OB services. It was not so easy to just eliminate that unit, as the community was up in arms. Instead, promises were made to the community about what the HCA would do to generate more business. They swore they wanted to see SPH succeed, but they have done nothing to put SHP or even VCMC in a better, more competitive position. They don't even bill for all the services rendered.

Can you imagine that these administrators actually run the SPH without ever getting input from the staff on the ground, working in the hospital? I learned long ago that when there is a problem at a jobsite, the best way to figure out the solution is to involve those who work at the site. We will never solve our problems with paper pushers -- bureaucrats who just look at numbers but know nothing about the hospital and don't really care to know because they never ask any of the relevant questions, much less the most important ones. And they don't really want to succeed because they are not doing anything to make things better. That was demonstrated by Mr. Zimmerman's response to Supervisor Lopez's question this afternoon regarding whether the budget addresses the question of how the County will handle the transportation requirements to transport critical patients

from the Santa Clara Valley to VCMC. Well, what do you know -- there is nothing in the budget to address that deficit caused by the closure of the SPH ICU unit! We don't even have a contract in place with a private ambulance provider for these services. So what are the people in the Santa Clara Valley supposed to do in the mean time --- just die and not be heard of?

While Mr. Folley may not have accomplished his objective then, he set the demise of the hospital in motion. Now it seems that Mr. Zimmerman has taken the baton to run the next lap in the marathon destruction of this community health care facility.

Make no mistake, by dismembering the arms of the hospital, it will only get worse, and then the pencil pushers will come back to the Board to totally shut down the hospital, or will just accomplish it through the next budget process, while nobody takes responsibility for the mismanagement. Go ahead, blame it on the state. Make the state the next scapegoat for an administration that sits on its fingers and does nothing to improve the management of the HCA.

The bottom line is the reality that this lack of leadership and management will eventually catch up with the HCA, and our whole health care system, which is at risk right now, will likely come crashing down. Once they run SPH out of business, it won't be so easy to hide the incompetence at VCMC. Unfortunately, the farther they drag down our health care system, the harder it will be to salvage it for our residents who rely on the County for their health care.

And don't think that the HCA has any real prospect or desire to build a real hospital on the Limoneira land. At the most the residents will get a glorified urgent care facility, probably with a community clinic like Magnolia or Las Islas in Oxnard. The cold part is that the way we are headed, there will be no transparency and certainly no honest policy discussion with the community or a transparent decision of the Board of Supervisors. Instead, we will be faced with a default judgment..... That is not the type of leadership our community deserves from our representatives sitting on the dais at the Board of Supervisors

Shame on all of you, if you let this happen without demanding accountability from all the people collecting the big bucks that are just marking time and picking up their paychecks without even an honest effort to figure out how to improve our health care system in the Santa Clara Valley. Ironically, this is the fastest growing area in Ventura County --- and there is no competition from another hospital. You would think our leaders would be chopping at the bit to get this right.....

I know you all voted to approve the recommended action this afternoon. But the public hearing is next Monday, June 17. There is still time to redeem yourselves. As I understand it, all the County will save by eliminating the ICU and the OB is \$4 million dollars. The County will still be left with an \$11 million loss. Is that enough of a justification to sacrifice SPH, even when you don't really know where all the red is coming from? I understand from the Auditor-Controller, that starting next month - this next fiscal year, the accounting for VCMC and Ambulatory Care will be separated. Then and only then can you really compare the financial positions of VCMC and SPH side by side. Perhaps what you need to do is light a fire under your administrators to start marketing the hospital to all the residents in the Santa Clara Valley. Start making money from the services that SPH is well positioned to provide the community, rather than running the hospital with blinders and one hand

tied around the County's back!

Si se puede!

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