

From: [Jan Becher](#)
To: [ClerkoftheBoard](#)
Subject: Budget hearing 6-17-24, Agenda Item No. 9—Please KEEP OPEN Santa Paula Hospital IC & OB units
Date: Thursday, June 13, 2024 2:25:53 PM

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To all interested parties:

The County's Health Care Agency has made a proposal to close IC and OB units at Santa Paula Hospital (SPH). Please reject this proposal. Keep open these units that are vital to our community's well-being.

Strategic Plan Conflicts

First of all, keeping open the IC and OB units at SPH is clearly and completely in line with Ventura County's mission, values, and guiding principles as laid out in the Strategic Plan for 2024-27:

1. *Access to quality healthcare is essential for our community to thrive.* (p. 2)
2. *To provide superior public service and support so that all residents have the opportunity to improve their quality of life while enjoying the benefits of a safe, healthy, and vibrant community.* (p. 4)
3. *Maintain the highest standard of health....* (p. 6)
4. *Provide equitable and timely access to quality healthcare, mental health, and public health services.* (p. 6)

If SPH loses its ICU and OB units, Santa Paula citizens “*access to quality healthcare*” will be affected. We will have to travel a minimum of 20-25 minutes to get to other locations. We are not asking you to open up a new hospital with these units—that would indeed require considerable deliberation and new financial outlay. Rather, we ask only that the existing units continue to remain open and available to us. If Ventura County is truly committed to its stated goal to “*maintain the highest standard of health*” in order to serve all residents, why would we close care units that are already functioning and serving the community of Santa Paula? Additionally, if these units are closed and we need to drive 20-25 minutes to get to other hospitals, our “*equitable and timely access to quality healthcare*” will suffer.

Financial Issues

As shown in the Summaries of the County's Financial Data, it appears that the net position, balance, and cash flow are all strong. The greatest perceived “deficit” seems to be debt service, and that is a temporary yet necessary deficiency. Taking out that deficit, the Medical Enterprise expenses can be supported by the county. Nothing in the county's Financial Data summaries support closing SPH's IC and OB units.

Quality of Care Issues

Our local SP Times newspaper has printed articles stating that not enough people are making use of the IC and OB units in SPH. I do not know how that was determined, or if the conclusions take into account our demographics. However, if we do have people choosing to go to Ventura instead of staying here in town, perhaps that points to a perception that we have a lower quality of care at SPH. If that is true, then that is the issue to be addressed—not closing the units. We deserve to have the same quality of care here as there is in other parts of the county.

In Conclusion, closing SPH's OB and IC units is not in keeping with VC's Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles. Recall that the guidelines set forth in the Strategic Plan should be "*the roadmap that provides guidance for the Board of Supervisors and County staff to work towards and meet the same strategic priorities and goals.*" We do not believe that closing the SPH OB and IC units will lead to "*a better quality of life for all.*" (p. 1) Also, closing these units does not make good financial sense. And finally, if there is another "hidden" reason why fewer people are using these units, let's look into that before taking the final and drastic measure of taking away these services for good. Let's examine whether we are getting the best quality care in SPH as is available in other hospitals throughout the county.

Thank you for considering our objections to the proposed closures.

Yours,

Greg & Jan Becher
Santa Paula Residents since 1995

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Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:8