



**DONALD R. GREBIEN**  
**MAYOR**



November 27, 2017

Rhode Island Department of Health  
3 Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02906

Re: Pawtucket Memorial Hospital

Dear Sirs/Madams:

On behalf of City Council President David Moran and the City of Pawtucket, it is with tremendous disappointment and sadness that I provide these comments regarding the proposed closure of Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island (the "Hospital"), known locally and lovingly as "Pawtucket Memorial Hospital." The Hospital has been the integral health care provider for the residents of Pawtucket, Central Falls and the region since it was founded in 1894. It is where many of our residents and their children were born, and where many of their parents and grandparents received dignified care before they passed on. If the Department of Health (DOH) approves the pending closure plan, a part of the each of these two cities' hearts will forever die with it. Our residents and families will be significantly disadvantaged.

When the proposed closure was announced in mid-October, I publicly expressed my opposition. We believed that opportunities to keep either a fully-operational hospital under different ownership or a smaller operating health care facility had not been adequately and/or transparently explored, and that the City's residents would suffer greatly both from a health care and an economic perspective.

Indeed, on November 1, 2017, the attached joint letter was sent to Care New England ("CNE") from the Governor, and the Mayors of the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls (collectively, the "Letter Signatories") demanding that prior to or contemporaneous with the filing of a so-called "reverse CON application," CNE submit to the Letter Signatories a written proposal identifying which specific health care services would remain at the Hospital campus, how those services would be operated and capitalized, the number of doctors, nurses and other personnel that would be committed by CNE to operate these services, and the duration of CNE's commitment. The following day, rather stunningly and insultingly, CNE submitted its reverse CON application to DOH to close the Hospital's Emergency Department without simultaneously submitting the requested written response to the Letter Signatories. We believe that CNE's strategy was to make the closure of the Hospital a *fait accompli* rather than to attempt to first come to an accommodation with the Letter Signatories. DOH has the obligation and responsibility to look into this as well as all alternatives as part of the reverse CON.

Disappointingly and grudgingly, we understand the current reality that our vibrant Pawtucket Memorial Hospital will never be returned to the form and context which we have all come to know, to love and, most importantly, to rely upon for the health care of ourselves and our loved ones. That is why we are asking DOH, as the regulatory body, to protect the services, community assets, and jobs along with the quality of care that this community deserves.

The community relies on these essential services and expects DOH to look into every option before the reverse CON is granted. As Mayor, with Council President Moran, we are doing our part with no tools or regulatory oversight to protect this community asset. The City is also meeting with Brown University, who as you know has a residency program at the Hospital, to get their input on the proposed relocation of health care services at Memorial. Many of my fellow Pawtucket residents, from elected leaders to individual citizens, are doing similar actions to call for no stone to be unturned. We implore you to look at all options.

We are doing our best to advocate for the retention of as many health care services as possible for our residents. Towards that end, the Governor's Office has been hosting weekly meetings with representatives of the cities, the Governor's office and CNE. CNE, to its credit, has started to display what appears to be a good faith commitment to work with the Governor and the cities to reach such accommodations. Indeed, as a starting point towards such an accommodation, CNE has publicly committed to retain the Hospital's very valuable primary care program to be located either on the Hospital campus or otherwise within the City of Pawtucket.

While it is our hope that we can reach such further accommodations, the City has reserved its right, as expressed in the joint letter, to seek the appointment of an examiner or another court appointed fiduciary if no such accommodations can be reached.

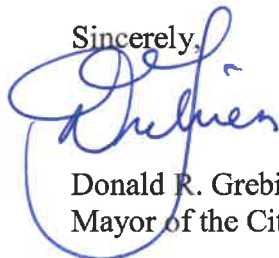
While we oppose the pending application, and believe that emergency services should remain at the Hospital campus, if DOH approves the application, we request that DOH make CNE's commitment to retain the Hospital's primary care services within the City of Pawtucket, along with all other health care services which DOH determines will be needed for the continued access of health care for our residents, conditions to the approval of any such closure.

We further urge DOH that when it considers CNE's closure plan, it does so within the context that the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls are financially distressed and have no surplus funds in order to provide additional emergency services or transport services to their underserved, uninsured and underinsured populations. The reality of these cities' financially distressed conditions was known to CNE when it purchased the Hospital. While Miriam Hospital may only be a few miles away from the Hospital, there is a large, diverse population which will have difficulty obtaining the services that they need. Neither the City of Pawtucket nor Central Falls can afford to provide additional emergency services and the associated additional cost to transport our residents in cases of emergency. In order to approve any closure plan, CNE must address to DOH's satisfaction how CNE will overcome this financial reality because it directly impacts the continued access to health care for these regulatory and statutorily protected populations. Such a finding is required under Section 10.1.2(i) of the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Hospital Conversions.

As the Mayor of Pawtucket, and with the leaders who represents the majority of affected constituents, I respectfully request DOH to protect the services, community assets, and jobs along with the quality of care this community deserves. We also need to look at what the reuse of the campus will be if DOH approves the reverse CON. To rush this process without understanding the long-term goals and plans would be an injustice to the community.

I will supplement these comments when I speak at the meeting this evening and appreciate your oversight.

Sincerely,



Donald R. Grebien  
Mayor of the City of Pawtucket

CC: Gina M. Raimondo, Governor  
Mayor James A. Diossa, City of Central Falls  
Pawtucket State House Delegation  
David Moran, City Council President  
Pawtucket City Council  
James E. Fanale, MD, Executive Vice President & Chief Clinical Officer, Care New  
England Health Systems