

July 31, 2024

Commissioner Robbie Goldstein
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108



Secretary Kate Walsh
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Nashoba Valley Medical Center Closure Announcement

Dear Commissioner Goldstein and Secretary Walsh,

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC). The DEC is the permitting and regulatory authority overseeing the sustainable redevelopment of former Fort Devens, now known as the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (Devens). Devens is comprised of portions of the underlying communities of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley. The DEC functions as the board of health, conservation commission, zoning board of appeals, historic district commission and planning board for Devens.

Over the past 28 years, the redevelopment of Devens has been nothing short of a regional economic, environmental, and social success - reinvigorating the local economy by attracting over 120 businesses that employ more than 10,000 people. Many of these businesses and their employees rely on the regional services that Nashoba Valley Medical Center provides, not to mention our growing residential population. Businesses in Devens include major life-science, manufacturing, and clean technology companies like Electric Hydrogen, Bristol Myers Squibb, Commonwealth Fusion Systems, Jabil, among many other national and international businesses that were drawn to this region for the multitude of available services, including Nashoba Valley Medical Center. As the economic success of Devens continues to grow, so does the need for support services that Nashoba Valley Medical Center provides.

The closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center will have significant impacts on a large vulnerable population as well as the many social support services within Devens, including Tara Vista Behavioral Health Center, Clear Path for Veterans, Transitions Women's Shelter, Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, and Shriver Job Corps, not to mention the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Devens and Shirley. With our aging and at-risk populations in Devens and the surrounding region, the need for the services that Nashoba Valley Medical Center continues to grow.

The Devens Fire Department, Public Safety, and Public Works, as well as the surrounding towns of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley Fire, Public Safety and Public Works Departments and their residents also rely on the close proximity of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center for urgent care and support. Closing this hospital could have devastating impacts on emergency response and transport times for our first responders, creating potentially life-threatening delays in service.

As the local Board of Health for Devens, we work directly with the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health who do an excellent job assisting with public safety and healthcare in the region. Their public health and nursing staff are already stretched thin providing services to their 16 member towns and Devens. The closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center will place additional pressure on these already strained resources as well, which will lead to a reduced level of care region-wide and significant additional expenses to local businesses and residents as they try to seek healthcare options that are further away – and out of reach for many vulnerable populations.

Medical care for this growing and thriving region is a necessity for our continued shared prosperity. The closure of Nashoba Valley Medical Center will have significant economic impacts to Devens and this region as a whole. We hope that you will do all within your power to provide funding and support to help maintain and improve the vital healthcare needs and services that Nashoba Valley Medical Center delivers to this region. We would ask that you explore all feasible options for the hospital to remain in operation to serve the vital needs of this region and protect and expand healthcare in the Nashoba Valley. The ongoing sustainable growth and redevelopment of Devens and the surrounding communities in the Nashoba region depends on it.

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership,

Sincerely,



William P. Marshall,
Chair
Devens Enterprise Commission



DEVENS ENTERPRISE COMMISSION

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