



September 12, 2022

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

James Conforti  
Interim President and CEO  
Sutter Health  
2300 River Plaza Drive  
Sacramento, CA 9583

Dear Mr. Conforti,

As the Chairperson of the Peninsula Health Care District (PHCD), I am asking you to rescind the decision by Sutter health to not reopen the Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center Pool in San Mateo. As you are aware, the pool was closed abruptly in March 2020 in response to the pandemic. It was later announced in July 2021 that the pool would be permanently closed. To date, Sutter officials have offered only two reasons for the closure. The first was "the continued uncertainty surrounding Covid" and the second was Sutter's "focus on providing quality acute care services and our ongoing efforts to be good stewards of resources have led us to close the program".

The closure of the therapy pool leaves a gaping hole in the continuum of health-care services in San Mateo County. The Mickelson pool was the only warm water therapy pool of its kind in our County and its demise has left hundreds of patients, former patients, and future patients with no access to similar services. Many of these people are severely debilitated. The pool and the habilitative care were not only a respite from the daily reminder of their condition but also a proven therapeutic experience. The rationale for leaving these people without needed care is not one that fosters a high degree of confidence in a multi-billion dollar healthcare system that, as you well know, is rapidly moving from an acute care system to an outpatient-based ambulatory system.

Mr. Conforti, the Mickelson pool has been a beloved community institution for over 25 years. In fact, the pool was constructed with donations from the community residents who recognized the clinical and emotional value of the services the facility could provide. To eliminate these services appears to be a short-sighted strategy that is the antithesis of the provision of comprehensive care that Sutter purports.

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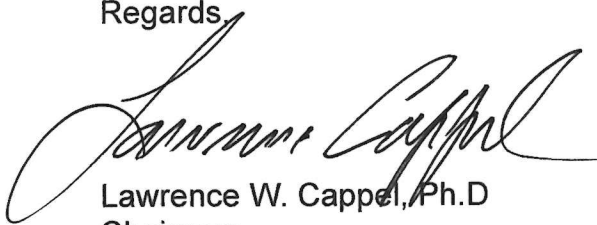
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The Peninsula Health Care District has conducted significant research on whether an alternative pool site could be available or even constructed. While the future may hold some possibilities, that future is many years away. The patrons of the pool do not have years to wait. Just as you would want a cancer patient to have the care they needed as soon as possible, the users of the pool have waited long enough. They need the care they need now.

The PHCD has offered to assist in repairs and refurbishing the existing pool facility. We would also be open to assisting in the staffing and operational costs of a refurbished facility. This offer eliminates cost as a hurdle in getting this much-needed facility back on line.

The PHCD strongly suggests you reconsider not only working with PHCD but also the entire community to bring back this cherished facility. It is a complement to so many of your programs here in San Mateo County. It is also the right thing to do.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence W. Cappel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "C".

Lawrence W. Cappel, Ph.D  
Chairman  
Peninsula Health Care District

CC: PHCD Board of Directors  
CEO Cheryl A. Fama