



800 E. Washington Blvd.
Crescent City, CA 95531

Del Norte Healthcare District

P.O. Box 2034

550 Washington Blvd, Ste. 400

Crescent City, CA 95531

Dear Healthcare District Board:

I am in receipt of your letter dated March 14, 2021, in which you have seemingly confused the decision by Del Norte County Health and Human Services (“HHS”) to not pursue the development of a Crisis Stabilization Unit (“CSU”) as being a decision made by Sutter Coast Hospital. While Sutter Coast Hospital offered to provide space on our campus for HHS to locate a CSU and offered HHS some support in staffing the CSU, the actual party responsible for establishment of a CSU is the county, not the local hospital.

Specifically, CSU’s are the responsibility of the County Mental Health Plan. They may contract out for the service, i.e., Telecare in Stanislaus County or own/operate the CSU directly. I have attached a link that might be educational in terms of better understanding who holds responsibility for the care of psychiatric patients within the County.

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1372

To better understand the responsibility that counties hold for providing or arranging for the provision of mental health services within a county, you may wish to study how this obligation has been addressed in other counties within the state. Counties as diverse as San Francisco, Stanislaus, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Orange, Nevada, Humboldt, Marin and Solano all have arranged for the development of CSU’s, or for provision of those services through a third party. While I recognize that Del Norte County may not have a sufficient population or funding resource to develop a CSU, it nonetheless has the obligation to arrange for such patients’ care.

Please know that my motivation for speaking to the Board of Supervisors last week regarding this issue was not to disparage or blame our County Department of HHS, but rather, to make the Board aware of the challenges we are facing and the risks being posed to our staff and patients. This was done as an effort to open a dialogue that might lead to a more sustainable option for patients requiring mental health services. As an organization, the safety of our staff and patients is of utmost importance, and we look forward to further conversation on this issue. In fact, it was

Sutter Coast Hospital that initially proposed to the County approximately 5 years ago the opportunity to collaborate in the development of a CSU. I personally offered that suggestion after visiting the CSU developed on the campus of Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital and Nevada County. At that time, we were seeing considerably fewer psychiatric patients than we are today, so it was a difficult concept to support financially; however, circumstances and the volume of psychiatric patients in the county have changed considerably since then.

Inasmuch as the Healthcare District derives much of its revenue through property taxes assessed on Del Norte County residents, this might be a worthy cause for which your organization might consider providing financial support to the County. It certainly would be nice if we could use this crisis as an opportunity to work collaboratively toward a community-wide solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mitchell J. Hanna". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Mitchell J. Hanna
CEO