



May 8, 2023

Mr. Warner L. Thomas
President and CEO
Sutter Health
2200 River Plaza Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Mack E. Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center Therapy Pool

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as CEO of Sutter Health.

We, the undersigned, are state and local elected leaders in the County of San Mateo, including the California Senate and Assembly, the County Board of Supervisors, and the Peninsula and Sequoia Health Care Districts, and we write to commend Sutter on its decision to reopen the Mickelson Therapy Pool in San Mateo.

As you may know, the Mickelson warm water therapy pool, located at the Sutter Health Mills Medical Center campus in San Mateo, was closed during the recent pandemic. This closure has had devastating health effects on the elderly, chronically ill, disabled and other vulnerable populations that for years depended upon the Mickelson pool to maintain their health, well-being and mobility. Their stories are heartbreaking, and all reports are that for every day the Mickelson pool remains closed, their health and mobility continues to deteriorate. We have heard from patients with chronic conditions who were once independently mobile, but who now, from lack of access to warm-water therapy, require expensive personal assistance to accomplish even the basic necessities of life.

Historically, the Mickelson therapy pool was used in two ways: for short term physician-prescribed physical therapy and, of equal importance, for “open access” self-directed therapy available (with a doctor’s release) to all community members for a monthly fee.

Concerningly, in February 2020, one month prior to the Covid-19 shelter-in-place county directive and subsequent Mickelson Center closure, Sutter dramatically cut the “open access” hours for community use. That reduction in access did not meet the needs of community members.

We write to ask that you commit to reopening the pool for both usage models with ample community access by a date certain (we desire to see the pool reopened by July 1), or else explain the medical, engineering, or financial reasons why not.

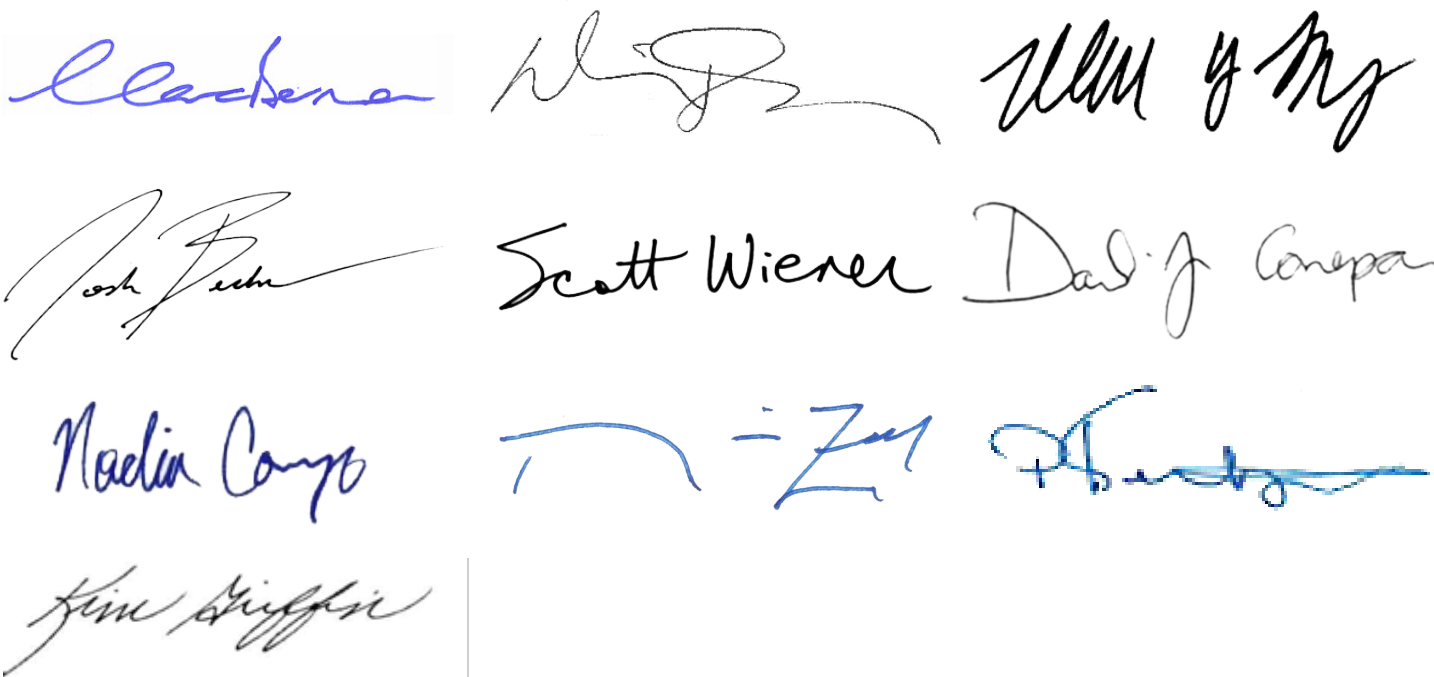
The reopening of the pool is important in and of itself, but another reason why the pool closing has captured the attention of the undersigned is that it is symbolic of a disturbing trend over the last several years of Sutter Health, a not-for-profit organization, eliminating vital community health services seemingly on the basis of lack

of profitability rather than community health need. The closure several years ago of the “Senior Focus” program (essentially an adult-day care for dementia patients that gave family caregivers much needed respite time) jumps to mind, among others. In our view there are certain community services that serve small, but vulnerable, populations that responsible and compassionate leaders should not close for purely financial reasons. We believe the closure of such programs by your predecessors was unwise and we would like you to know we have taken notice.

However, we would also like to acknowledge that we detect from some of your public statements that you may be more attuned to improving community relations and we welcome you to seize the current opportunity to both solve the pool problem and signal a reinvigorated commitment of Sutter Health to the local communities it serves— especially to vulnerable populations therein.

We invite you to San Mateo County to celebrate the reopening of the facility when it occurs, and to meet some of the patients and the undersigned so that we may learn, listen, and share perspectives. Together, our organizations can prevent disease, make our communities healthier, and build wellness initiatives in San Mateo County.

Sincerely,



The image shows ten handwritten signatures in blue ink, arranged in four rows. The first row contains three signatures. The second row contains three signatures, with the middle one clearly legible as 'Scott Wiener'. The third row contains three signatures, with the first one clearly legible as 'Noelia Corzo'. The fourth row contains one signature, clearly legible as 'Kim Griffin'.

Assemblymember Marc Berman
Assemblymember Diane Papan
Assemblymember Phil Ting
State Senator Josh Becker
State Senator Scott Wiener
San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa
San Mateo County Supervisor Noelia Corzo
Peninsula Health Care District Director Dennis Zell, Esq.
Sequoia Healthcare District CEO Pamela Kurtzman
Sequoia Healthcare District Director Kimberly Griffin, RN

cc: Sutter Health Board of Directors