

November 6, 2021

Office of Health Strategy  
Attn: Vicki Veltri  
P.O. Box 340308  
450 Capitol Avenue, MS#51OHS  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Re: Nuvance Health's planned cuts to Sharon Hospital

Dear Ms. Veltri,

Nuvance Health announced to our community on Sept. 29 that it plans to close the Labor and Delivery unit at Sharon Hospital in 8-12 months, along with cutting some surgical services. The communities served by Sharon Hospital strongly oppose Nuvance's planned cuts – we need these vital services to remain in our community as we live 30-60 minutes away along country roads from the next nearest hospital. Sharon Hospital physicians and registered nurses agree with us – they voted 25-to-1 against Nuvance's proposed changes.

In July 2018, the hospital system that previously owned Sharon Hospital, HealthQuest, attempted to close Maternity, but the community rallied together against the closure, and HealthQuest kept Maternity open. When HealthQuest merged with Western Connecticut Health Network on April 1, 2019 to form Nuvance Health, the new company's leadership signed the Certificate of Need 18-32238-CON (CON), pledging to maintain all medical services, including Maternity, at Sharon Hospital for at least five years. Now, with more than two years left to go on its pledge to the state regulators that approved the merger, Nuvance has already reported to the community that it plans these cuts within the next 8-12 months. It has been more than five weeks since Nuvance announced these cuts, but it has yet to apply to the Office of Health Strategy for approval. There is a crisis erupting here of Nuvance's own making – by announcing a closure it does not have regulatory approval for, nurses are already leaving for new jobs, doctors are making backup plans for upcoming deliveries and expectant parents who do not want the uncertainty of planning a birth at a facility that may not be open have started looking at other options.

Labor and Delivery is a critical resource for area families. Our region has experienced a large influx of new, young families looking to escape crowded urban environments due to the pandemic. Having a local, highly rated and fully operational hospital in close proximity is one reason many families have chosen to live and raise children here. Moreover, safe access to a birthing facility is our reproductive right.

Ms. Veltri, please support the families of the Northwest Corner and hold Nuvance Health accountable to its pledge to Connecticut regulators to maintain all hospital services for a minimum of five years. Rather than cutting services, Nuvance should be using the remaining years of the CON to find viable, long-term solutions for all Sharon Hospital departments, including Maternity.

Sincerely,

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Name Signature Email

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Address, City, State, Zip Code