

Dear Chair Altman, Vice Chair Everett, Honorable members of the Board and Health Care Policy Commission Leadership members, Senator Ives and Representative Kelcourse,

I am writing to request your support of the proposed Lahey Health System/ Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center merger which will include 11 other community hospitals. Approval of this merger will facilitate *increased* access to quality health care throughout the proposed coverage region.

It will help ensure that smaller community hospitals will remain open and operational to serve their local populations while providing these communities with equal access to highly specialized care when needed. Patients in the far areas of the North Shore and outer regions of Cape Ann rely heavily on community hospitals such as Anna Jaques Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital. Unless this merger is completed, these hospitals and likely others, could resort to drastic reduction in services or even face closure. Not only would access to health care be impeded, but the community as a whole would suffer. Thousands of people would lose their jobs, including those employed by the hospitals, as well as lost jobs and lost revenue from businesses that supply and service the health care industry. Local hospitals also aid their communities with outreach and educational programs, charitable donations, volunteer efforts, etc. These benefits would all be eliminated.

Opponents of this merger most likely are from the “competing” health care giant, Partners Health Care. Failure to approve the Lahey/BIDMC merger essentially grants Partners a monopoly within the state and therefore increasing health care costs. Partners Health Care charges significantly more for health services and already has a huge market share. Partners appears to receive preferential consideration from state commissions and regulatory agencies because of their political lobbying abilities.

Hospitals, such as Lawrence General, care for many thousands of high risk patients. I worked for nearly two decades at LGH and a nearby health care clinic and saw first hand the needs of the many coming through their doors. LGH needs the continued support of this proposed merger to continue the necessary work they do serving the people of the greater Lawrence area.

I respectfully request your support for approval of the Lahey Health System/Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center merger to ensure availability and access to high quality affordable health care, regional economic viability and peace of mind for communities.

Sincerely,

Pamela Carabba, MS, RDN, LDN