

From: Edward and Susan Hand  
To: Massachusetts Health Policy Commission  
Ref: HPC-CMR-2017-2

We are writing with respect to our concern about the viability of Addison Gilbert Hospital, AGH, both within Lahey Health System, and in the proposed merger with CareGroup. and its Component Parts, etc.

As you well know Rockport and a large portion of Gloucester are on an island with only 2 bridges to the mainland, both relatively vulnerable to storm events. At a recent Municipal Vulnerability meeting in Rockport, sponsored by the Commonwealth, this was a serious concern, especially in the case of a major storm event, made worse by projected rising sea levels in the future.

But it doesn't take a major storm to make one realize the need for a comprehensive medical facility on the "island." Cape Ann has a growing elderly population, as does the Commonwealth, but one aging even faster than the rest of the Commonwealth, due to the influx of retirees. Since moving to Rockport ourselves, seven years ago I, Edward, have had a number of reasons to visit AGH, an instance of Sepsis Pneumonia, several orthopedic issues, routine blood work for a heart condition and numerous PT appointments. In the first case I was evaluated, stabilized and sent by ambulance to Lahey Health System in Burlington, where I stayed for a week on antibiotics, and then another week of outpatient antibiotic treatment. In the second situation I was evaluated, sent on to Beverly Hospital to an Orthopedist, and spent one night as an inpatient. In a recent bout with pneumonia I spent 4 days at AGH. I received excellent care in all cases and with the initial sepsis pneumonia

it likely saved my life. Susan has had numerous PT appointments at AGH as well.

Access is a critical factor in health care. It is ½ hour plus to Beverly Hospital from our home in Rockport versus less than 15 minutes to AGH. This is both critical in an emergency and really adds up in terms of convenience and environmental costs for scheduled appointments, such as blood work, doctor's visits and PT. Should AGH close there will be substantial additional patient costs, as doctor's offices tend to cluster near hospitals.

So for numerous reasons, public safety, emergency medical care, triage, and follow up care, it is important that AGH remain a full service functioning medical facility.

Thank you for your concern and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Edward and Susan Hand