



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 11, 2023

To: Honorable Members of the Berkeley City Council
From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín, Councilmember Sophie Hahn
Subject: Project Manager/Coordinator for potential Alta Bates Hospital Closure

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to enter into a contract with CONCUR in an amount of \$35,000 to support a Project Manager/Coordinator for the purpose of creating a strategic plan to engage Sutter Health, healthcare expertise and regional communities to alleviate the health impacts as identified in the Health Impact Analysis (HIA), completed by the Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California Berkeley in December 2018, by the proposed closure of Alta Bates Hospital. The contract term will be for four (4) months and will be funded from the Mayor's Office Personnel Budget.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Sutter Health announced its intention to close Alta Bates hospital, the only full-service acute care hospital between Berkeley and the northern most communities of Contra Costa County, by 2030. This is in spite of Sutter's pledge to the Berkeley community to keep the hospital open after its merger with Summit in 1999. Ostensibly this is to avoid the cost of retrofitting the hospital per SB 1953 requirements.

Alta Bates, colloquially known as the Birthplace of the East Bay, has a capacity of 347 beds, and is the third largest general acute care facility in the region. Its service area includes almost 850,000 residents, of whom 44% are people of color and 36% are below 200% of the federal poverty level.

On July 12, 2016, City Council passed Resolution No. 67,615–N.S, opposing the plans to close the hospital resolving, among other things, that the Mayor and City Council would establish open forums to inform and educate Berkeley residents and ensure that the residents would be notified of any and all forums to ensure a full service acute care general hospital for future generations. The Resolution further resolved that the Mayor, City Council and City Departments pledged to cooperate fully to facilitate this process (Attachment 1).

The Alta Bates Task Force, a group of elected officials and health experts was formed in 2017, with the purpose of investigating options that would maintain a full-service acute care hospital in Berkeley and educating the public around the impacts of a potential closure

Following over two years of task force meetings, community events, and futile outreach to Sutter Health, a formal request was sent to Sutter Health on February 7, 2019 requesting that they provide a plan, in writing, for the retrofitting/rebuild of the hospital or provide their future plans for the property. Sutter Health has not provided such a plan and continues to reduce services at the Alta Bates campus and continues to imply that it will no longer be an acute care hospital after the seismic retrofit requirements are enforced in approximately 2030.

The HIA report identified potential health impacts of the closure of Alta Bates. With the hospital serving as a regional hub for pregnancy and birthing, there would be reduced high quality prenatal, birthing & neonatal care, which is alarming in a country that already has an increasing rate of maternal mortality - higher than any other developed country. A potential closure would disproportionately impact people of color and low-income/uninsured residents, many of whom are already at a higher risk of having health complications. Emergency departments in hospitals throughout the region would see increased crowding, leading to longer wait times, longer travel times, and placing additional strains on ambulances, negatively impacting both the Berkeley Fire and Police Departments. It also places the entire I-80 corridor at additional risk in the event of a disaster such as an earthquake or wildfire, with victims having less access to emergency services.

The Alta Bates Task Force, identified the need for an Outreach Coordinator/Project Manager in 2019. On October 15, 2019 City Council approved a referral to the Mid-Year Budget Process an amount of \$25,000 for Berkeley’s contribution towards a budget of \$50,000 to support an Outreach Coordinator. Commitments to fund the projects were also obtained from adjacent communities and from the Chancellor’s Grant.

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to effectively coordinate outreach and community education, the recruitment was put on hold. As the COVID-19 pandemic moves into the endemic phase, CONCUR has been identified as a resource for the Project Manager/Coordinator. The management of this position will be the combined responsibility of the Mayor’s Office and Councilmember Hahn. Due to the vacancy of some positions in the Mayor’s Personnel budget there are adequate resources to fund this contract.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$35,000 from the Mayor’s Office personnel office budget

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Not Applicable

CONTACT PERSON

Mayor Jesse Arreguín 510-981-7100

Attachments:

1: Resolution 67,615

RESOLUTION NO. 67,615–N.S.

OPPOSE SUTTER HEALTH CORPORATION'S PLAN TO CEASE ACUTE CARE HOSPITAL OPERATIONS AT ALTA BATES HOSPITAL IN BERKELEY, FURTHER REQUESTING CITY DEPARTMENTS TO IDENTIFY PENDING OR FUTURE APPLICATIONS SOUGHT IN FURTHERANCE OF SUCH CLOSURE AND REPORT SUCH APPLICATIONS

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, has been providing "full service" Acute Care hospital services in Berkeley, the East Bay and in Alameda and other counties for decades, and

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center is licensed for 944 acute care beds with more than half of them in Berkeley, and 347 of those at the Ashby facility; and

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center's Ashby facility is crucial for providing timely healthcare services for the people of Berkeley and cities beyond Berkeley's border; and

WHEREAS, from 2002 through 2015, records from CA's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, OSHPD, revealed very high utilization of acute care services at Alta Bates' Berkeley facility, including over one million total days that hospital beds were occupied; which consisted in part of the following:

- 559,136 days patients were treated in Medical units;
- 228,498 days babies treated in Neonatal Intensive Care;
- 103,157 babies delivered;
- 111,946 admissions through the Emergency Departments;
- 73,612 adult Critical Care patients treated; and

WHEREAS, these numbers do not reflect the full scope of the amount of patients treated at the Berkeley facility because census data reported to CA's OSHPD agency does not include patients in "observation" status despite stays of up to 48 hours with "observation" patients; and

WHEREAS, these numbers reflect only the Ashby facility and not the Alta Bates Summit census data at the Oakland Summit site; and

WHEREAS, Sutter Health Corporation has announced its intention to dramatically reduce services by closing the Alta Bates' Berkeley facility in light of SB 1953; and

WHEREAS, the consolidation of hospital services results in loss of services as happened when Alta Bates Hospital merged with Summit Medical Center in 2000, and despite Sutter Health arguing that services would be enhanced, not reduced, when many in the community opposed the merger at that time, Alta Bates Summit afterwards experienced

the loss of many services in the past 15 years, overwhelmingly at the Alta Bates and Herrick campuses; and

WHEREAS, the national average for bed capacity per 1000 residents is 2.9 beds according to World Bank statistics. In Alameda County, the bed capacity is at 1.8 beds and neighboring Contra Costa at 1.4 beds, a figure that does not reflect the final phase of the 2015 closure of Doctor's Medical Center in San Pablo; and

WHEREAS, many hospital departments are often at capacity, and all of the local Emergency Departments already have large delays in service, which will only be exacerbated by the merging of the two full-service Acute Care Hospitals with their Emergency Departments to one Oakland location, increasing even further wait and admission times; and

WHEREAS, the University of California, has 37,581 Undergraduate and Graduate students who depend heavily on hospital services at the Alta Bates campus, including the Alta Bates Emergency Department in close proximity to campus, to address the students' life-threatening illnesses and injuries, and need for medical care; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley, North Alameda, West Contra Costa area recently suffered the closure of an acute care hospital in San Pablo, and the loss of acute care hospital services as a result, and further, is subject to severe earthquakes, frequent urban interface with wild fires, industrial chemical releases and mass traffic casualties—all of which require emergency services; and

WHEREAS, when Berkeley's first responders are mandated to travel to Summit Campus in Oakland, they are unavailable for service for the rest of Berkeley for prolonged periods of time presenting a significant danger to the lives of Berkeley residents, and forcing an unacceptable standard of healthcare upon them; and

WHEREAS, closures and relocations of corporations on the community, impacting an array of businesses including family-owned businesses, with losses often doubling or tripling those who either lost jobs or had to relocate; and

WHEREAS, when access to healthcare is made more difficult, patients often delay healthcare but also stop seeking the care that is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the stated mission of corporate Sutter Health is to "enhance the well-being of people in the communities we serve through a not-for-profit commitment to compassion and excellences" in health care services; and

WHEREAS, Sutter Health as a non-profit corporation pays little or no property taxes for operations which are non-profit, such as its non-profit hospitals (as opposed to its for-profit operations) and is a highly profitable healthcare corporation whose total assets in the billions grow substantively each year, as shown:

- 2011: \$11,820,000,000
- 2012: \$12,390,000,000
- 2013: \$14,215,000,000
- 2014: \$14,290,000,000
- 2015: \$14,344,000,000

WHEREAS, Sutter Health needs to live up to its stated mission, be held accountable for its actions, and provide the necessary healthcare for Berkeley residents, and must not be allowed to put profits before lives nor endanger the residents of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley City Council has a role and responsibility to provide resources to the public to promote and protect its health with no regional body researching the health needs of the greater community.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Berkeley oppose Sutter Health Corporation's plan to close its acute care services at Alta Bates Hospital and calls upon Sutter Health to cease and desist all actions in furtherance of any and all plans to close Alta Bates hospital.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council shall establish open forums to inform and educate Berkeley residents of the possibility of Sutter Health's seismically retrofitting Berkeley's Alta Bates facility; shall ensure the residents of Berkeley are notified of any and all forums under the City of Berkeley's purview; and ensure a full service acute care general hospital for future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments pledge to cooperate fully to facilitate this process such that it is expedited as much is legally permitted.

The foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Berkeley City Council on July 12, 2016 by the following vote:

Ayes: Anderson, Arreguin, Capitelli, Droste, Maio, Moore, Wengraf, Worthington and Bates.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.



 Tom Bates, Mayor

Attest: 

 Mark Numairville, City Clerk

