



United States Senate

May 25, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

I write in strong opposition to the recent decision by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to terminate Laguna Honda Hospital's authority to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which would upend the treatment and force the relocation of some of the most vulnerable residents in San Francisco. I strongly urge you to reverse this decision and instead direct CMS to work cooperatively with Laguna Honda Hospital as it makes whatever changes are necessary for recertification into the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

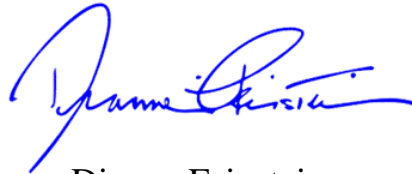
Laguna Honda Hospital is deeply rooted in the history of San Francisco, providing care for more than 150 years and servicing patients during critical health emergencies, including the 1906 earthquake, the 1918 flu pandemic, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Laguna Honda Hospital continues to serve as a safety net, providing care to approximately 700 patients, many of whom have complex medical needs and no other options to receive health care services.

It is my understanding that due to CMS' recent and unexpected decision, Laguna Honda Hospital will now need to relocate numerous patients. According to San Francisco health officials, these patients will need to be moved outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, including in Northern California, the Central Valley, Southern California, and even possibly outside of California. Transfers to other states will complicate the process even further given the need for each patient's Medicare and Medicaid benefits to be transferred to the receiving state.

Laguna Honda Hospital's leadership has demonstrated that they take CMS' findings and feedback very seriously and will continue to do so. The hospital has initiated a comprehensive approach to make improvements in patient safety and care and retained experts in the field to conduct a comprehensive organizational assessment, make recommendations on gaps and improvements, and then implement those improvements.

As the COVID-19 public health emergency continues with reported cases and hospitalizations rising in California, CMS' decision to relocate these vulnerable patients adds unnecessary risk to their health and well-being. Therefore, it is imperative that CMS' decision be reversed and Laguna Honda Hospital be given the opportunity to keep patients and staff on-site as it applies for recertification into the Medicare and Medicaid programs. I appreciate your attention to this urgent matter, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/af