



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE CONTINUITY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY THE STEWARD HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

- WHEREAS*, Steward Health Care System, LLC (Steward), the largest private, for-profit health care network in the country, faces escalating financial challenges, including missed payments to vendors and creditors, bringing into question the short- and long-term operability of the system’s hospitals and threatening the continuity of health care services for thousands of patients in Eastern Massachusetts; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Steward’s 2010 acquisition of six Caritas Christi Health Care hospitals, including Carney Hospital (founded 1863) in Dorchester and St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center (founded 1868) in Brighton, marked what was then the most significant shift of hospital assets from nonprofit to for-profit status in Massachusetts; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Many of Steward’s hospitals are designated by the Commonwealth as “High Public Payer” hospitals and by the federal government as “Disproportionate Share Hospitals,” receiving public reimbursements due to their serving high ratios of low-income patients who are either uninsured or rely on government-sponsored insurance programs such as Medicaid (MassHealth) and Medicare; *and*
- WHEREAS*, Steward’s indication of its desire to transfer ownership or close some facilities across the country, as demonstrated by a December 2023 notice of intent to close the New England Sinai Hospital in Stoughton, has raised alarms about a possible closure’s severe impact on the region’s already overwhelmed health care system with limited capacity to accommodate additional patient volume; *and*
- WHEREAS*, The potential for Steward’s financial situation to jeopardize the continuity of access to health care and vital services offered at their nine Massachusetts facilities makes regional coordination imperative to prevent a public health emergency, ensuring stability and protecting the well-being of patients, health care workers, families, and our communities; *NOW, THEREFORE BE IT*
- ORDERED*: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the continuity of health care services in relation to the financial challenges faced by the Steward Health Care System and that representatives from Steward, state and local regulatory agencies, health care providers, researchers, patients, labor and advocacy organizations, and interested members of the public be invited to attend.