



County of San Diego

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

July 10, 2018

Tri-City Healthcare District
Board of Directors
4002 Vista Way
Oceanside, CA 92056

Dear Tri-City Healthcare District Board of Directors:

The decision by the Tri-City Healthcare District Board of Directors to suspend operations of the inpatient Behavioral Health Unit and Crisis Stabilization Unit is a failure to the community and significantly impacts mental health patients, their family members, and the general public. We believe Tri-City Medical Center is a critical asset in the region's psychiatric emergency system and the loss of these important behavioral health resources to our North County communities will greatly affect our most vulnerable residents and puts lives at-risk.

There is a tremendous need for emergency and inpatient psychiatric services in North County, where hospital based services are limited to only Tri-City Medical Center and Palomar Hospital. By closing your inpatient Behavioral Health Unit, those in need of intensive inpatient care who are living in communities served by Tri-City Medical Center will need to go much farther to receive care. Placement outside a patient's community creates additional barriers for families trying to support their loved one's treatment and recovery. The Crisis Stabilization Unit also provides critical support to individuals experiencing a psychiatric emergency. Closure of these units will impact law enforcement who will need to spend more time transporting persons experiencing a psychiatric emergency to more distant facilities. Also, San Diego's network of health systems and behavioral health partners will be strained if forced to absorb these additional patients. In particular, the region's emergency departments will see a dramatic increase in overcrowding by cases that should be more appropriately diverted to in-patient services. Now more than ever we need to focus our efforts on supporting a robust system of care for those in crisis.

County staff is currently reviewing your proposed transition plan, dated July 3, 2018, to ensure it meets your contractual obligations and mitigates impacts on patients and behavioral health partners. We strongly recommend you reconsider your decision and explore other solutions rather than removing these vital services from the region.

The County of San Diego remains committed to ensuring the health and safety of our most vulnerable populations and hopes Tri-City Medical Center will continue to partner with us and other hospital and community partners to provide critical mental health services to North County.

Handwritten signature of Kristin Gaspar in black ink.

Kristin Gaspar
Supervisor, Third District

Handwritten signature of Bill Horn in black ink.

Bill Horn
Supervisor, Fifth District