

Alisha Simon
Health Economics Program
Minnesota Department of Health
P.O. Box 64882
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882

Dear Ms. Simon,

I am one of the internal medicine, pulmonary, and critical care physicians at Regions Hospital. I have had the pleasure of serving our St. Paul community over the past 21 years, first as a medical student and now as staff at Regions Hospital. I currently serve as the Department Chair of Critical Care Medicine, Director of the Medical Intensive Care Unit, and Section Head for Critical Care. It has been amazing! We continue to grow, our community population is living longer and with more severe illness than in the past.

I am writing in support of Regions Hospital's proposal for 100 additional inpatient bed licenses. Regions serves a unique role in the east metro as a safety-net hospital, a level 1 adult and pediatric trauma center, and a burn center with 5 intensive care units serving the sickest of the sick. We offer community programs for health and well-being as well as culturally sensitive palliative care through home health and hospice care. We are actively developing community based access to health care, public education, and housing for vulnerable patient populations upon inpatient discharge. And, even with this robust community outpatient network, there will always be patients who need hospitalization. As you know, these patients that now "qualify" for inpatient admission are much sicker than they were even ten years ago.

Regions Hospital is an essential resource in our community to partner with our community and their family, whether or not they have adequate insurance. We are literally running out of beds to care for these vulnerable, multicultural, highly diverse members in our community. Transferring patients away from Regions is not best care for patients or their families.

The capacity constraints directly affect our ability to keep our patients in this community where we have created these dynamic, effective, and essential community resources that can help support patients not only when they are well enough to be in their home, but also when they are so sick they need to be hospitalized. The success of these partnerships is based on trust that we have developed over decades. We want to keep our patients and families in their neighborhood and it is our duty to optimize resources to do so. I am happy to help in any way I can to make this possible. Our unique patient population will do best when they can count on Regions Hospital to make space for them in order to keep them connected to outpatient programs, support of their extended families and directly connected to the services with which they are familiar.

For these reasons I urge you to find Regions proposal for 100 additional inpatient beds in the public interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Ham', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Kealy Rae Ham, MD
Department Chair of Critical Care Medicine- HealthPartners Medical Group
Section Head of Critical Care - Regions Hospital
Director of the Medical Intensive Care Unit - Regions Hospital
Assistant Professor - University of Minnesota Medical School
MS 11503F