

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMERCE  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

February 12, 2024

Damond Boatwright  
President & CEO Hospital Sisters Health System  
4936 Laverna Road  
Springfield, Illinois 62707

Dear Mr. Boatwright,

I write to make you aware of the concern I have heard from patients, employees, and community members in response to your decision to close HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, along with all 19 Prevea Health locations in Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley. Rural hospitals provide essential health care services and contribute to the economic well-being of their communities. Therefore, the closure of a rural hospital is a serious matter and requires a thoughtful transition.

I was disappointed by your abrupt announcement, which will result in the loss of emergency rooms, hospital beds, and critical care units, as well as access to maternal health care, behavioral health care, and dialysis treatments in western Wisconsin. As a mission-driven health care system, I urge you to abide by your stated values as you wind down operations at Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's Hospitals. It is imperative that HSHS maintain transparency and communicate clear transition plans to patients, employees, and health care partners remaining in the region, as well as state and local government.

As part of that transition, I urge you to make every effort to support the continuation of care, particularly as stakeholders and neighbors work together to fill the gap you are leaving behind. I expect that you will remain open and operational to provide all scheduled services until the dates included in your announcement and meet your obligations to patients and employees. Moreover, HSHS should consider delaying closures to ensure health care services continue to be available in the Chippewa Valley. I expect that HSHS consider, in good faith, offers to purchase your facilities and equipment to support the continuation of health care services in the region for the patient populations served by Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's Hospitals.

I also want to remind you about your responsibilities to employees under federal and state law. It is my expectation that you continue to provide employees with the pay and benefits they are entitled to and that HSHS meet any other outstanding legal obligations. Should I receive any complaints of early termination from my constituents, I will work to ensure those allegations are fully investigated.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Cc: Ashok Rai, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer Prevea Health