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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format..... LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline..... Rockingham
—Article Number:..... 43390



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 The wrong time for BMH nurses to strike

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3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 Do the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital nurses understand
5 the implications of walking off the job now?

6 Their employer is on the skids with a \$14.5 million
7 deficit. A strike would further damage the hospital's already-
8 sagging reputation, driving more patients to Cheshire Medical
9 Center in Keene, Grace Cottage in Townsend, or Dartmouth
10 Hitchcock in Lebanon, depriving the struggling hospital of
11 desperately needed revenue.

12 Chapter 11 bankruptcy wouldn't be pretty. When a
13 hospital files, it typically enters a court-supervised process
14 intended to restructure its debt rather than shut down
15 immediately. This allows the facility to continue providing
16 medical services while working on a financial recovery plan or
17 searching for a buyer.

18 Given horror stories of corporate hospital ownership in
19 Massachusetts and elsewhere, our community probably wouldn't
20 want a private owner even if one were to show interest.

21 Financial strain may lead to reduced staff, longer wait
22 times in emergency rooms, or the cancellation of non-essential
23 procedures. While many hospitals try to avoid layoffs, staff may
24 face pay cuts, reduced hours, or increased workloads due to
25 budget constraints.

26 The nurses' anger regarding mismanagement is
27 understandable. They are justifiably incensed at a board that [paid](#)
28 [over \\$400,000 in salary and benefits per year](#) to a CEO who
29 stopped coming to work when the going got rough. And they
30 rightly criticize management that waited for years before thinning
31 the ranks of expensive middle managers.

32 Co-CEOs Drs. Elizabeth McLarney and Tony Blofson are
33 doing a great job of managing a hospital in survival mode.
34 They're making every effort to provide excellent patient care, fair
35 wages, and job security while skirting bankruptcy.

36 Delayed gratification would be the nurses union's wisest
37 move. Postponing wage and benefit demands until the hospital is
38 in better shape would be temporarily painful, but doing so pales
39 in comparison to what bankruptcy would mean for them and
40 their community.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

42 #####BEGIN MAXISSUE#####
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LINKS:

43 #####BEGIN LINKS#####
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VIDEO:

44 #####BEGIN VIDEO#####
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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

45 #####BEGIN LOGLINE#####
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