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—For section..... Voices/Letters from readers
—Format..... LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline..... Brattleboro
—Article Number:..... 43346



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 BMH's financial woes should not be solved on backs of
2 frontline workers

####END HED####

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Since moving to Brattleboro in the 1970s, I have counted
6 on Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) and its medical
7 practices to be there when I, my friends, and my family have
8 needed care.

9 That care is largely provided by nurses and support staff
10 — the people whom we patients interact with at the bedside, in
11 the lab, and in other hospital departments and medical offices.

12 These health care workers — lifted up as heroes during the
13 pandemic — deserve contracts that will encourage them to stay
14 rather than seek employment elsewhere.

15 I am aware that BMH is experiencing financial
16 challenges. If there was mismanagement by the previous
17 management team, that was not caused by the frontline workers,
18 and BMH’s financial woes should not be solved on their backs.

19 Our local health care workers show up every day and
20 should be treated as assets to the hospital, not as a “solution” to
21 the hospital’s solvency problems. They have expressed
22 willingness to negotiate in good faith, and I urge BMH’s
23 administration to work with the unions on contracts that reflect
24 the respect these workers deserve, and that enable them to afford
25 to live in our local area.

26 Our community hospital is not immune to national
27 trends affecting rural hospitals. According to researchers at the
28 University of North Carolina, 152 rural hospitals have either
29 closed completely or closed their in-patient services since 2010.

30 This alarming trend is predicted to accelerate, especially
31 as more and more people become uninsured due to cuts to
32 Affordable Care Act subsidies and Medicaid.

33 This does not bode well for a rural state like Vermont,
34 where back roads and dicey weather can make a trip to a distant
35 hospital dangerous to impossible.

36 I encourage the hospital administration to advocate for a
37 universal health care system that would ensure that all of us can
38 access care and that would bolster our hospitals and their
39 workers by eliminating the need for uncompensated care.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

41 ####BEGIN MAXISSUE####
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LINKS:

42 ####BEGIN LINKS####

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VIDEO:

43 ####BEGIN VIDEO####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

44 ####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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