

TO: The Baystate Health Community

FROM: Mark A. Keroack, MD, MPH
President & CEO

Molly Gray, MS, RN, NE-BC
President & Chief Administrative Officer
Baystate Health Eastern Region

DATE: January 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Baystate Health Eastern Region

Over the course of our nearly 150-year history of delivering care to our community, Baystate Health has adapted to the changing needs of each of our communities in order to ensure the vital delivery of care. We carefully look at current needs and plan for the future to ensure we deliver on our mission. As we look to better meet the contemporary healthcare needs of communities across our Eastern Region in a sustainable way, Baystate Health will close the Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center within the next two years and relocate a majority of its services to Baystate Wing Hospital, 9 miles away in Palmer.

We, along with our Baystate care providers, patients and community are grateful for the quality care that has been provided at Baystate Mary Lane over the many years since it was first established in 1909. We know this is difficult news for our Baystate Health family. We would like to share with you the reasons behind this decision and the plan for transition of programs and services for the Eastern Region community.

The Current State

The fact is, despite our significant investment in this location during the past several years, patients are choosing to receive care in other locations.

- Nearly half of Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center's capacity is unused during the daytime and 90 percent is unused during overnight hours.
- Baystate Mary Lane's Satellite Emergency Facility has had minimal utilization for emergency level care. Of the 28 patients per day seeking care in this location, over 85 percent (24 out of 28) present with common, minor, non-urgent conditions like cold, flu, and sprains, which could be treated in a primary care setting.
- It has been challenging to recruit and retain providers in the area, especially in small practices. Over the past two years, Baystate Health Eastern Region primary care lost seven physicians and gained just one. This market reality highlights the need to consolidate practices in response to physician candidates who seek jobs in robust multi-specialty practices that provide the opportunity to network with colleagues and share the on-call needs to support patient care.
- Due to the age of the current Baystate Mary Lane building, to maintain steady-state operations would require over \$5 million in construction investments to maintain the facility, compliance and operations over the next three years. Consolidating operations at Baystate Wing will allow us to better invest resources in state-of-the-art care, emergency care, physician recruitment, and improved access to primary care. It also allows for more effective staffing in an area where recruiting clinical professionals can be challenging.

Plan for Transition

As we work on this transition, Baystate Health will follow the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulatory processes for making changes to services. Our goal over the next several months is to work collaboratively with the Baystate Mary Lane team to develop an orderly transition plan for programs and services to Baystate Wing.

In June, the Baystate Mary Lane Satellite Emergency Facility will close and cancer care services will be transitioned to the D'Amour Center for Cancer Care. Over the next two years, imaging/3D mammography and rehabilitation services, as well as OB/GYN and pediatric medical practices, will be relocated to Baystate Wing.

- Emergency services: Baystate Wing Hospital offers patients comprehensive 24/7 emergency services in a newly constructed (2018) emergency department that is nine miles from the Baystate Mary Lane campus.
- Cancer services: Comprehensive cancer care will be provided at the D'Amour Center for Cancer Care in Springfield, where patients at Baystate Mary Lane are already receiving specialized cancer care. Cancer patients who receive care at Baystate Mary Lane will be offered transportation at no charge following the transition of care to Springfield.
- Baystate Wing Hospital's comprehensive healthcare service plans include:
 - primary and multi-specialty medical practices including integrated behavioral health, substance use treatment, with expanded hours and walk-in same day appointments. These practices currently serve the needs of Ware and Warren residents who accounted for >8,000 outpatient visits in FY20;
 - specialty care in cardiology, pulmonary, gastroenterology, surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics; and
 - significantly expanding GI endoscopy.
- We are committed to investing in community-based primary care physician recruitment and retention in this region, with a focus on increasing accessibility for same day appointments and offering increased availability of pediatric care.
- We value our employees and will work to identify new opportunities at Baystate Wing and other Baystate locations for current Baystate Mary Lane employees affected by these changes. Because we are not closing services, but rather relocating them, we anticipate that most employees will have the opportunity to transfer to similar positions at Baystate Wing. If similar positions are not available, employees will be given priority consideration for other positions within Baystate Health for which they qualify.

Honoring the Legacy and Looking Forward to the Future

We will remember and honor the history of Baystate Mary Lane and those who made it possible and are evaluating opportunities to provide appropriate recognition to our legacy donors and others. In recognition of the current state and structural needs of the facility and lack of market demand, Baystate Health will invest in the demolition of the building and will be gifting the green space to the town of Ware which will decide the best future use of the site.

As we transition care from Baystate Mary Lane, we honor its proud history and recognize the personal impact it has had on so many in the community. Thank you to our Baystate Health family for your support in this transition and thank you to our entire Baystate Mary Lane team for your outstanding contributions to our patients and the community we serve. We look forward to the future, meeting the needs of our patients, and delivering on our promise of advancing care and enhancing lives for our Eastern Region community.