



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification  
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

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Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

March 23, 2021

MARYLOU SUDDERS  
Secretary

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Tel: 617-624-6000  
www.mass.gov/dph

Andrew S. Levine, Esq.  
Husch Blackwell LLP  
One Beacon Street, Suite 1320  
Boston, MA 02108  
[Andrew.Levine@huschblackwell.com](mailto:Andrew.Levine@huschblackwell.com)

BY EMAIL ONLY

**Re: Review of Response Following Essential Services Finding**

**Facility:** Steward Health Care System, LLC – Norwood Hospital

**Services:** Obstetrics Services – 19 beds and 16 bassinets

**Ref. #:** 2114-763

Dear Mr. Levine:

On March 16, 2022, the Department of Public Health (the "Department") received from you, on behalf of Steward Health Care System, LLC – Norwood Hospital, a response to our March 2, 2022 letter indicating that Norwood Hospital (the "Hospital") must file a plan with the Department detailing how access to services will be maintained following the discontinuation of Obstetrics services at Norwood Hospital. This includes nineteen (19) beds and sixteen (16) bassinets. Thank you for responding to our request in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Pursuant to 105 CMR 130.122(G) the Department has completed its review of the submitted access plan. As a result of this review, the Department has prepared the following comments:

1. **Transportation:** Based on testimony submitted to the Department and presented at the hearing on February 15, 2022, concern was expressed regarding travel time for patients and the distance families who wish to visit will need to travel. The Department requests additional information on methods of transportation for patients who are high risk and in emergent situations as well as family and friends who wish to visit and will now have to travel a greater distance.

2. **Transportation:** In your response dated March 16, 2022, you indicate that if an expectant mother is in labor or believes they are near delivery and cannot drive, they have the option to call 911 and be taken by ambulance to Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center ("SEMC"), Good Samaritan or other appropriate hospitals. While the Department recognizes this mechanism for the transfer of patients to an alternative delivery site, it may not be a viable option for some patients. Please provide the Department with additional details regarding transportation options for expectant mothers who would otherwise be hesitant to call for an ambulance.

Under the provisions of 105 CMR 130.122(G), the Hospital must submit a timely response to the comments of the Department. Please submit your comments within 10 days of your receipt of this letter to my attention, in order that we may complete our review of the pending closure.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in this process. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Carlson at [Stephanie.Carlson@mass.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Carlson@mass.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steph Davis", written in a cursive style.

Stephen Davis  
Director

cc: E. Kelley, DPH  
J. Bernice, DPH  
R. Kaye, DPH OGC  
M. Callahan, DPH