



October 7, 2024

**VIA EMAIL (Walter.Mackie@state.ma.us)
AND CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Walter Mackie, J.D.
Licensure Unit Coordinator
Division of Health Care Facility Licensure & Certification
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street
Marlborough, MA 01752

Re: Notice of Intent to Close Pursuant to 105 CMR 153.023 – Highview of
Northampton (License #0872)

Dear Mr. Mackie:

This letter is to provide notice to the Department and Interested Parties¹ pursuant to 105 CMR 153.023 of Highview of Northampton (the “Facility”) intent to voluntarily discontinue operations and close the Facility, effective February 6, 2025.

The Facility is a 120-bed DPH licensed skilled nursing facility located at 222 River Road, Leeds, Massachusetts 01053. The Facility provides comprehensive short-term rehabilitation, long-term, and complex medical care services. The Facility has been owned by Leeds MA SNF LLC and is managed and a part of Athena Health Care Systems (“Athena”) since December 2014. Athena owns, operates, and/or manages fifteen (15) other skilled nursing facilities in Massachusetts. Athena has made the difficult decision that for financial and aging physical plant reasons, the continued operation of the Facility is not viable without considerable investment.

¹ Interested Parties include: (a) Each resident of the Facility and where applicable the resident’s legal representative; (b) The designated family member of each resident; (c) The Facility’s resident council; (d) The Facility’s family council; (e) Each staff member of the facility; (f) The Offices of the State and Local Long Term Care Ombudsman; (g) Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Senator Jo Commerford; The Facility does not have a labor organization.



The following provides the Department with additional information about the Facility's operations and closure plan:

- (a) The Proposed Date of Closure. The Facility proposes to cease operations and close as of February 6, 2025.
- (b) Reasons Leading to Closure. Athena has made the difficult decision that the continued operation of the Facility is not viable due to two financial factors. First, despite Athena's best efforts, the Facility has significant monthly losses. Second, the Facility is located in an older building that requires extensive renovations and repairs.
- (c) The Facility Representative. The Facility's representative whom residents, family members, staff or other Interested Parties may contact with questions they may have regarding the proposed closure is Peter Stone, Administrator
- (d) Draft Closure Plan. The Facility is also submitting the enclosed draft closure plan (the "Closure Plan"). The Closure Plan will be distributed with this letter, posted at the Facility, and made available by the Facility's Administrator upon request.
- (e) Public Hearing. The Facility will work with the Department to schedule a public hearing on the proposed closure at least ninety (90) days prior to the proposed closure date. The Facility and the Department will provide notice of the date, time and place of the hearing as soon as it is available. A copy of the public hearing notice also will be posted at the Facility, and also will be made available by the Facility's Administrator upon request.
- (f) Public Comments. Interested Parties may file comments on the proposed closure and the draft Closure Plan with the Facility and/or the Department up until the date of the public hearing.

Please contact Savannah Ragali at (860) 751-3900 if you have any questions or should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lawrence G. Santilli".

Lawrence G. Santilli, Manager



Highview of Northampton

**222 River Road
Leeds, MA 02132**

Draft Closure Plan

Dated: October 7, 2024

This draft closure plan (the "Closure Plan") is being submitted by Leeds MA SNF LLC (the "Licensee") to the Department of Public Health (the "Department") for its approval, following a decision to voluntarily close Highview of Northampton (the "Facility") in accordance with 105 CMR 153.023.

A Notice of Intent to Close was sent to Interested Parties² on October 7, 2024. The Notice of Intent to Close included a copy of this Closure Plan. This Closure Plan will also be posted at the Facility and will be made available by the Facility's Administrator upon request.

In accordance with 105 CMR 153.023(A)(2), the following sets forth the Facility's Closure Plan:

- A. The following steps will be taken to assist residents or their legal representatives in preparing for the closure of the Facility:
1. Resident and Family Notification: The Department and all Interested Parties, including residents and their designated family member, received a copy of the Facility's Notice of Intent to Close dated October 7, 2024, which included a copy of the Closure Plan. A copy of this Closure Plan is also posted at the Facility and available from the Facility's Administrator upon request.
 2. Psychological Preparation or Counseling of Each Resident. The Facility will announce the closure to the residents on 10/7/2024. The Director of Social Work / Social Work staff will discuss the closure with each resident as well as in a group

² Interested Parties include: (a) Each resident of the Facility and where applicable the resident's legal representative; (b) The designated family member of each resident; (c) The Facility's resident council; (d) The Facility's family council; (e) Each staff member of the facility; (f) The Offices of the State and Local Long Term Care Ombudsman; (g) Representative Edward F. Coppinger and Senator Michael F. Rush; and (h) Jack Duggan, West Roxbury Liaison. The Facility does not have a labor organization.



forum. Thereafter, the Facility will contact the family of each resident and, if necessary, hold a family meeting via Zoom. The Facility will make resources available to assist the families in accessing and using the Zoom platform. If a family does not have access to Zoom, the Facility will work with the Family to meet their needs and adhere to the current social distancing requirements. After these meetings, the Administrator and Director of Social Work will be available upon request for follow-up phone or video conferences with residents and their family members or legal representatives to discuss the closure process. If a resident is admitted to the Facility after the closure announcement, the Facility will provide the resident and his or her family with a copy of the Notice of Intent to Close and the Closure Plan and will discuss the closure process.

3. Efforts to Find Appropriate Placement. There are a number of nursing facilities in the greater Springfield and Worcester community. The Facility will work with each resident and their family, if applicable, to find him or her an appropriate placement. Athena also owns and operates fifteen (15) other skilled nursing facilities in Massachusetts. Residents, at their choice, will have priority admission to these facilities.

Upon Department approval, The Facility staff shall contact long-term care facilities in the area and notify them of the impending closure and need for beds. Highview will collect written information from these other facilities and will make that information available in its common areas, and to each resident or their legal representative. Highview will accommodate planning communication between representatives of the nearby skilled nursing facilities and any resident or legal representative at their request.

Upon finding beds, Facility staff shall match available beds with residents to arrange for the best accommodation in terms of location, services, and psychosocial needs. To the extent possible, residents and / or their families shall be given an opportunity to participate in this process and to visit a suggested Facility to determine whether it is acceptable.

The Facility will consult with each resident or legal representative and, with the resident's consent, interested family members regarding placement options and the placement process being considered. Once a placement is determined, the resident





and family shall be notified in writing by the Facility of the proposed relocation and of their right to appeal such proposed relocation.

The Facility will prepare and orient the residents for the discharge in a form and manner they can understand. As necessary, appropriate psychosocial preparation and counseling for each resident shall be provided by the Facility to minimize the impact of the closure on residents and facilitate the residents' adjustment to their new environment. Residents will be transferred to receiving facilities in an orderly and safe fashion. The Facility will document the discharge of each resident's medical record.

4. Consultations. In addition to the resident and family meetings, the Facility's Director of Social Work will be available upon request for on-site conferences with residents and their family members or legal representatives to discuss the closure process. If a resident is admitted to the Facility after the closure announcement, the Facility will provide the resident with a copy of the Notice of Intent to Close and the Closure Plan and will discuss the closure process.
5. Family Meetings. As stated above, the Facility will be contacting the family of each resident regarding the closure and, if necessary, hold a family meeting via Zoom. The Facility will make resources available to assist the families as they access and use the Zoom platform. If a family does not have access to Zoom, the Facility will work with the Family to meet their needs and adhere to the current social distancing requirements. After these meetings, the Facility's Administrator, Director of Nursing or their designees will be available upon request for follow-up phone or video conferences with residents and their family members or legal representatives to discuss the closure process.

- B. The following steps will be taken to assist facility staff in preparing for the closure of the Facility:

The Facility Staff received a copy of the Facility's Notice of Intent to Close dated October 7, 2024, which included a copy of the Closure Plan. Staff meetings and individual conferences will be conducted in order to facilitate transition to a new employer with minimum disruption. Opportunities at other Athena facilities will be identified and staff will be encouraged to apply. Any Highview employee who transfers





to another Athena – related center will have their rate of pay, seniority, and vacation time honored. With respect to continued admissions, the Facility will wind down and adjust admissions based on staff attrition, while remaining flexible to ensure that a safe environment is maintained for the residents.

At the October 7, 2024, meetings and in follow-up written communication, all employees were notified that Highview needs to continue its operation through the closure, and it is necessary we maintain appropriate staffing patterns to ensure for the safety of our residents. With that in mind, the Facility will offer retention bonuses and other incentives to ensure that the facility will have sufficient staffing, including nursing staff, to ensure resident safety and attain the or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident. In addition, if necessary, the Facility will engage agency staffing. Athena will also arrange for local nursing homes and employers to conduct a job fair at Highview, if necessary, for our Highview employees to find employment outside of Athena and contact the Massachusetts Dislocated Worker Center and the Massachusetts Career Center, enabling employees to take advantage of those services. We believe that this will further ensure the continuity of staffing at Highview through its closure.

C. Medical Record Storage

Upon closure, the Facility's medical records will be maintained electronically by PCC Medical Records and in hard copy with Iron Mountain for ten (10) years. The medical record contact information is: Athena Health Care Systems, ATTN: IT Department, 135 South Road, Farmington, CT 06032, 860-751-3900.

D. Admissions Freeze

The facility currently has an admission freeze in place.

