



VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF
HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

April 20, 2016

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Thank you for your thoughtful deliberation last week on the issue of public participation in hospital board meetings.

Per your request, this letter documents VAHHS' suggested approach in writing.

Following the conclusion of the legislative session, VAHHS proposes to engage the boards of our member hospitals in the development of a proposal for your consideration next year that would create consistent and meaningful public participation opportunities at hospital board meetings.

This legislative session you heard testimony from the University of Vermont Medical Center about their experience in this area. As part of the VAHHS-led process, we would enlist UVM Medical Center leaders and trustees to share their experience with the rest of the VAHHS board and their hospital trustees.

Thank you for considering this approach. As I testified last week, many Vermont hospital leaders and hospital trustees have concerns about the unintended consequences of legislating more open hospital board meetings. Our primary concern is the recruitment and retention of hospital trustees. Vermont's hospital boards are made up of dedicated volunteer trustees who devote extensive time and energy to representing the community in the decisions of the hospital. We do not want to discourage them from serving.

In the interim, hospitals remain among the most "transparent" and regulated organizations in the state. Vermont hospitals are subject to extensive regulatory oversight and reporting requirements all of which is public information, spanning the continuum from the investigation of individual patient complaints to oversight of our annual budgets.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and so many others.

Sincerely,

Jill Mazza Olson, MPA, FACHE
Interim Co-Executive Officer and VP of Policy & Legislative Affairs