



Public Hospital Public Hearing
Testimony
Dayton City Commission
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August 7, 2024

Good evening Mayor Mims, City Manager Dickstein and members of the City Commission, my name is Amanda Byers, and I am the Director of Talent & Policy for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. As the largest regional business advocate in the greater Dayton region, the Dayton Area Chamber serves as the most trusted voice of business for nearly 2,200 businesses and organizations in southwest Ohio in a fourteen county region.

While the goal of improving healthcare access is admirable, building a publicly owned hospital in our city faces significant challenges that make it impractical at this time.

Firstly, the healthcare landscape has been shifting significantly. Nationwide, we're seeing a consolidation of facilities and services, especially in the wake of COVID-19. The trend is moving towards ambulatory and non-hospital-based care rather than building new acute care facilities. From 2018 to 2023, 117 acute care hospitals have closed in the U.S. due to low reimbursement rates, rising operational costs, and workforce shortages. These issues underscore the difficulty in sustaining new hospital ventures.

Acute care hospitals across the country are struggling under financial pressures. Our current payment models do not adequately cover the cost of care in these settings, and this trend is unlikely to reverse soon.

Comparing our situation to MetroHealth in Cuyahoga County is also problematic. MetroHealth benefits from a substantial health and human services levy, generating \$137 million annually, with \$32.4 million specifically for MetroHealth. In contrast, the proposed levy for a new hospital in Dayton would raise only \$2 million annually, which is inadequate compared to the funding required to support such a facility.

Building a new hospital involves complex considerations. We would need detailed plans for location, construction costs, and ongoing operational expenses. Labor and material costs are rising, and staffing such a facility in today's competitive job market is challenging. Furthermore, our area already has well-established emergency services with two top-performing trauma centers located within 5 miles.

The upcoming behavioral health hospital funded by the State of Ohio, with an initial investment of \$10 million, highlights the significant financial resources required for such projects. This facility will address critical needs in our region, which further emphasizes the financial and logistical hurdles of a new public hospital. The \$10 million appropriated in the capital budget will go toward purchasing the land and initial designs, additional funding will be needed to continue the project as well.

For transportation issues, our regional dispatch system ensures emergency needs are met, and Medicaid and Medicare are working to improve transportation support. Moreover, Kettering Health Dayton and Miami Valley Hospital are both relatively close and provide comprehensive acute care services.

In conclusion, while a new public hospital in West Dayton reflects a valuable aspiration, the feasibility is highly questionable given the financial, operational, and logistical challenges involved. Thank you for considering these points.