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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

April 1, 2014

Dear Berkshire County Neighbors:

I regret that a previous commitment will keep me from tonight's community meeting, but I wanted to send this message along to the North Adams community through Senator Downing, Representative Cariddi and Mayor Alcombright.

I know that the closing of North Adams Regional Hospital (NARH) has come as a shock to this community. The medical services and jobs lost are a serious concern to me as well. That's why my team has been in, and in touch with, the community for nearly two weeks now, working with the NARH leadership and other stakeholders to find a solution. The financial condition of the hospital made those solutions unusually difficult to find.

This morning I was in North Adams and met at length with the Senator, the Representative, the Mayor and senior leadership of Berkshire Medical Center (BMC) to work through short- and long-term solutions. I invited BMC to help us because they are the primary resource for medical services in the region, and because they have previously sought a partnership in North County. I can report the following outcomes of the meeting:

1. BMC has applied for a license to operate the Emergency Department in North Adams. The Department of Public Health (DPH) is expediting review and approval of that license. Our Congressional delegation has pledged to help expedite necessary federal review.

2. BMC estimates it will take 7-10 days to reopen emergency services in North Adams once its license is granted. This allows for time to work through staffing and labor issues with former NARH employees and facilities issues with NARH's board.
3. BMC is working on whether an interim walk-in urgent care facility can be opened to serve the region.
4. The Commonwealth has pledged to assist wherever it can.
5. We will engage a consultant to help develop a long-term plan for medical services in North County. While no one believes that there is a formula for a sustainable full service hospital, we do believe that emergency services, VNA, hospice and certain other ambulatory care can and should be sustained.

I share the community's frustration with the precipitous closure of NARH. In their stead, I feel hopeful that BMC will be a good and constructive partner, that there will be a sustainable model for medical services in North Adams going forward, and that great care in the meantime will be provided in Pittsfield. Many of the former hospital employees have or will be rehired by BMC; some will not. For all whose lives have been disrupted, we will do all we can to smooth the transition.

We're in this together and if we work together we will emerge on the other side stronger.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Patrick", written in a cursive style.

(Signed in Governor Patrick's absence.)