

**From:** [Minerva Walston](#)  
**Subject:** JOIN US: Save Laguna Honda  
**Date:** Friday, June 10, 2022 8:29:37 PM

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## Workers at Laguna Honda in San Francisco are fighting to keep their hospital's doors open

On June 14, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will be holding a hearing on the status of the recertification plan for Laguna Honda Hospital. It is crucial that our elected leaders hear from workers, patients, community members, and anyone who wants to keep the doors of our hospital open.

IFPTE Local 21 members — alongside our partner unions, the City Administration, and Laguna Honda Hospital Management — are working hard to recertify Laguna Honda Hospital and prevent closure. **Our chances of succeeding depend on public support. Please join us Tuesday, June 14, 3pm to save Laguna Honda Hospital.**

### Board of Supervisors Hearing – Laguna Honda Hospital

Tuesday, June 14 at 3 pm

City Hall, room 250

RSVP: Reply to this email or text (415) 412-4851

**Please wear Local 21 swag**

Laguna Honda Hospital is San Francisco's primary long-term care facility and home to many of San Francisco's most vulnerable. If Laguna Honda closes, it will trigger a crisis in San Francisco's Public Health system. There are no other facilities available to house the more than 700 residents who live at the hospital.

#SaveLagunaHonda

# Patrick Monette-Shaw

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June 14, 2022

Committee of the Whole, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Shamann Walton, Board President  
The Honorable Connie Chan, Supervisor, District 1  
The Honorable Catherine Stefani, Supervisor, District 2  
The Honorable Aaron Peskin, Supervisor, District 3  
The Honorable Gordon Mar, Supervisor, District 4  
The Honorable Dean Preston, Supervisor, District 5  
The Honorable Matt Dorsey, Supervisor, District 6  
The Honorable Myrna Melgar, Supervisor, District 7  
The Honorable Rafael Mandelman, Supervisor, District 8  
The Honorable Hillary Ronen, Supervisor, District 9  
The Honorable Ahsha Safai, Supervisor, District 11

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Testimony **Laguna Honda Hospital Closure and Patient Relocation Plan**  
(Agenda Item 62, File #220619)

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Dear President Walton and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

The potential closure of Laguna Honda Hospital would not only be disastrous for the 686 residents at LHH as of May 6, 2022, it would also be disastrous to other San Franciscans who will likely need this City treasure for generations to come who may need in-county skilled nursing and end-of-life care.

1. **Continue Today's Hearing to the PSNS Committee for Follow-Up** First and foremost, at the conclusion of today's Committee of the Whole hearing on the potential closure of LHH, I urge you to introduce, entertain, and pass a motion to continue today's hearing to the call of the Chair of the Board of Supervisors Public Safety and Neighborhood Service (PSNS) Committee to ensure this Board continues to receive monthly updates on the status of the *LHH Closure Plan*. In particular, I also urge you to waive the Board of Supervisors Rule regarding the 30-day hold typically involved before holding Committee level hearings.

The PSNS Committee needs to be actively involved in receiving regular updates on the efforts to obtain recertification of LHH through the September 13 potential closure date so members of the public are kept adequately informed about efforts to preserve this legacy facility any of us may need as we age and our health declines.

2. **Review HMA Consultant Contract Scope of Services** In response to the *LHH Closure Plan*, the Health Commission approved on June 7 **two contracts totalling \$5.6 million** to assist SFDPH in getting LHH recertified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Health Commission completed a \$1.8 million contract with *Health Services Advisory Group*. On June 13, SFDPH finally released the second \$3.8 million contract with *Health Management Associates* (HMA), which is for a 14-month period between May 9, 2022 through June 30, 2023. It is thought LHH will be submitting a recertification application for LHH to CMS by mid-September 2022, so it is unclear why the contract is for an additional nine months through June 2023. Spending \$5.6 million to regain CMS certification for LHH seems to be excessive.

The Board of Supervisors should review the HMA contract, because the contract seems overly-broad in terms of the scope of services to be provided. There are two "Tasks" described in the Scope of Services: Task 1 is to perform a "*Comprehensive Assessment*," and Task 2 involves efforts related to "*CMS Recertification*" of LHH. Task 1 involves:

*"HMA, in coordination with the Department, will conduct a comprehensive "top to bottom" organizational, operational, and clinical assessment of LHH to identify current performance gaps in the provision of care, operational effectiveness, regulatory standards compliance, and quality outcomes. Focus areas will include, but not be limited to: Executive Leadership, Organizational Structure, Medical Staff, Nursing Operations,*

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**Laguna Honda Hospital Closure and Patient Relocation Plan** (Board File 220619)

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*Hospital Governing Body, Management, Administrative Operations, Care Models, Organizational Change Management, and Financial Analysis of Care Models.”*

The scope of “top-to-bottom” assessment in Task 1 is apparently to determine how far LHH may have to go to satisfy federal standards, and suggests the HMA contract may involve a potential massive overhaul of LHH’s mission and operations beyond simply obtaining CMS recertification. The Board of Supervisors should review the scope of services in the HMA contract.

- 3. Hold SF Department of Public Health Employees Fully Accountable** The Board of Supervisors should explore whether additional SFDPH staff and the Health Commissioners themselves need to be replaced and held accountable for the situation now threatening LHH’s existence.

Between October 2021 (when inspectors notified LHH that it needed to submit a plan of correction to fix substandard care deficiencies and submit a plan of correction) and April 2022, LHH and the Health Department responded to the increasing federal concerns about the situation at LHH by downplaying the seriousness of the problems, including by issuing press releases saying the state inspectors had found only *minor* deficiencies.

Five days after CMS halted LHH’s federal re-imbursement, during the Health Commission’s April 19, 2022 meeting Director of Public Health Dr. Grant Colfax continued to minimize the severity of the problem. Colfax claimed in his *Director’s Report* to the Commission that state surveyors had identified that week “*new issues not previously communicated to Laguna Honda leadership.*” Colfax pooh-poohed the new findings as being “*unrelated and technical individual infractions.*” That’s nonsense, because all of SFDPH’s senior leadership know full well that when state surveyors return for follow-up surveys, additional findings of new problems can be — and often are — identified.

During the six-month period between October and April, the Health Commission’s LHH Joint Conference Committee (LHH-JCC) — consisting of three health commissioners and LHH senior management — were briefed repeatedly about the substandard care violations and federal deficiencies at LHH. So, it’s clear LHH’s governing body — the Health Commission — was fully aware of the potential seriousness of the situation.

On April 14 — the same day CMS froze payment to LHH from Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement and halted new admissions to LHH — the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) published an article about LHH’s potential closure, in which the *Chronicle* attributed to LHH CEO Michael Phillips as having said “... *that there will be no changes to hospital staffing.*” Oddly, Phillips stepped down (or was removed) as LHH CEO a month-and-a-half later on June 2, ironically making him the first change to LHH’s staffing.

It should not be just Mr. Phillips who is replaced. In response to an excellent May 20, 2022 [SFStandard.com](#) article by Matt Smith titled “*The Last Alms House: Laguna Honda Faces Daunting Overhaul,*” political consultant Jack Davis posted an on-line comment<sup>1</sup> saying “[This is] *Outrageous given the battles and money spent to redo Laguna Honda. Fire the City’s Health Director [Grant Colfax] and entire Health Commission.*”

Mr. Davis is on to something. Colfax and the Health Commission had known about the systemic problems at LHH and had downplayed the severity of the problems. They should also be replaced, as Mr. Phillips was.

Respectfully submitted,

**Patrick Monette-Shaw**

*Columnist,*

*Westside Observer* Newspaper

cc: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sfstandard.com/public-health/the-last-almshouse-laguna-honda-faces-daunting-overhaul-to-satisfy-federal-regulators/>