

BARNEY FRANK
4TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

2252 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2104
(202) 225-5931

29 CRAFTS STREET
SUITE 375
NEWTON, MA 02458
(617) 332-3920

558 PLEASANT STREET
ROOM 309
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740
(508) 999-6462

THE JONES BUILDING
29 BROADWAY
SUITE 310
TAUNTON, MA 02780
(508) 822-4796

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

April 20, 2012

Dear Friend,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the closure of the Taunton State Hospital. I could not agree more that the hospital needs to stay open. Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that this hospital has had not only in Taunton, but also in much of Southeastern Massachusetts, including the Cape and the surrounding islands. Taunton State Hospital plays an important role in the mental healthcare of Massachusetts residents, providing superior, accessible treatment. The closure of this hospital would jeopardize the ability of the mentally ill in Taunton and the surrounding area to access a nearby facility and severely limit the capacity for family involvement in long-term treatment. Its closure would also likely lead to the overtaxing of other mental health hospitals or private facilities, possibly even making mental health treatment unaffordable to some patients. I am not willing to endanger the integrity of the healthcare infrastructure of all of Southeastern Massachusetts with this closure. The Taunton State Hospital has played a crucial part in this system for 158 years, and I do not see any reason for its role to end now.

The prospect of closing the Taunton State Hospital also threatens the livelihoods of the nearly 410 employees who would be faced with a choice between unemployment and a 60 mile commute to the relocated facilities in Tewksbury or Worcester. Most of these employees have committed 20 years or more to the hospital, often working as direct caretakers for the same patients for much of that time. The closure of the hospital, then, would not only sever important personal connections between staff and patients, but also put dedicated employees at risk.

I am writing this letter to assure you that I hear your concerns and am on your side. I will do everything I can to keep the Taunton State Hospital open and continue to provide important mental health services and to maintain the integrity of the health care infrastructure of Southeastern Massachusetts. I have been in touch with Senator Pacheco and Representative Haddad, both representatives of Taunton, and plan to continue working with them as well as residents in a united front against this proposed plan.

Sincerely,



BARNEY FRANK