

October 31, 2023

Mr. Ronald Winters, Independent Monitor
Gibbons Advisors
1900 Church St, Suite 300
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Mr. Winters,

We have recently been made aware of a letter that was presented to you on behalf of some physicians who have previously been involved with Mission Hospital. Their version does not tell the whole story, and there are many of us who do not feel that their voice represents us as a whole. Therefore, we are submitting a response from practitioners in our current clinical community with a different point of view.

Today, practicing healthcare across the country is complex and challenging. In the wake of COVID, hospitals and practices are struggling in the face of declining reimbursement, staffing shortages, medication shortages and overall gaps in many supply chains. Combined, these make the delivery of quality care a daily practice in creativity, innovation and resiliency. We believe Mission Health is weathering national healthcare challenges well, thereby allowing our patients to continue to receive excellent care throughout western North Carolina. We would like to have the opportunity to tell you some of the great things that are happening so that you may be provided with a more current and well-rounded perspective.

In spite of the claims made in the previous letter, Mission Health's services have continued to grow to meet the needs of our patients. Just looking at Mission Hospital, these have included many renovated units, expanded services in minimally invasive surgery, a Pediatric ER, a new Wound Care and Burn Center, newly renovated Labor and Delivery spaces, and the soon to be open, Sweeten Creek Mental Health & Wellness Center, a beautiful facility that will meet a great need with respect to the mental health crisis in our country.

We would also like to take the opportunity to speak to the great quality of care we are delivering day in and day out. The implications of the letter that suggest we are not giving the best to patients is offensive to those physicians and advanced practice providers who are showing up every day to provide excellent care to our community. In fact, Mission Hospital has been recognized repeatedly for outstanding quality and patient safety.

With respect to patient safety, we have received five Leapfrog A Safety Grades since 2020, including being named Leapfrog Top Teaching Hospital in 2022. Mission regularly has had several unscheduled inspections by regulatory agencies such as The Joint Commission and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. From these deep dive inquiries into our facility and programs, there have been no major patient safety findings.

From a quality standpoint, we have repeatedly been named a Top 50 Healthgrades Hospital and have received additional Healthgrades recognition for Cardiac Care, Critical Care, Gastrointestinal Care, Orthopedic Surgery, Surgical Care, Pulmonary Care and more. We have received a certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by the Joint Commission and the American Stroke Association and have received several top tier star ratings from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. Additionally, we are Magnet Recognized for our outstanding nursing care. These are just a sampling of our many accolades.

With respect to physician engagement, it is true that in 2019, as the transition under HCA unfolded, there were many changes. As with any big transition, it was not without tension or challenges. There was turnover within both the hospital and physician leadership which meant new relationships had to be formed. This, no doubt, was emotionally difficult and has taken time for us to heal. We all had to learn to work together with new leaders, new nurses and new physicians, all amidst the chaos of a worldwide pandemic that shook our healthcare system to its core. The physicians who stayed have stepped up to lead, and we have welcomed amazing new doctors into our community adding new physician leadership and expertise to western North Carolina.

With the changing physician landscape, Mission Hospital leaders recognized the need to engage physicians in hospital level decision-making. A twice monthly physician leadership program was subsequently created to

support our fellow physicians so that they may have a voice. For those who have chosen to participate, it has offered the opportunity for physicians to sit around the table with senior hospital leadership including the CEO, CMO, COO and CNO. This is just one of many tangible ways in which Mission and HCA Healthcare, together, have stepped up to support our teams.

At the end of the day, we come back to our mission statement, "Above all else, we are committed to the care and improvement of human life." We, as physicians and practitioners, are here for our patients and the western North Carolina community. We want the best care to be available and know that the way to make that happen is through positive relationships with other physicians and with HCA Healthcare.

We encourage those that signed the other letter and any physician who wants to come to the table to reach out to our current medical staff leadership. Our Chief of Staff and Chief Medical Officers are always available to discuss ways in which we can improve.

HCA Healthcare has demonstrated that they are our partner for the future. Mission Hospital is ready to move forward. We welcome your support as we continue this journey.

In closure, here is a comment from one of the physicians on Mission's Medical Staff.

"The evolution of Mission becoming an HCA hospital has not been easy in many ways, occurring as it did while the hospital was completing some phases of building changes and moves that stretched staffing, as well. Through all of the early changes and now, patient care continues to be at the forefront of our concerns as physicians. The dedicated nursing staff and other support staff also continue to carry that torch high. Staffing issues continue to plague our entire country in the wake of the worst medical disaster of recent history, but those who are here, and who are coming on board, are as skilled and dedicated as they come."

On behalf of Mission Hospital, Regional Mission Health Physicians and Advanced Practice Providers,

Megan Barber, PA	Ryan Gunselman, MD	Ansley Miller, MD
Ray Barfield, MD	Eric Hanson, MD	William Misch, PA
Rebecca A. Baum, MD	William Hathaway, MD	Ben Motz, MD
Michelle Blair, NNP	Ashley Helgeson, MD	David Mullins, MD
Bre Bolivar, MD	Ronald Heninger, PA	Ashley Newell, MD
John C. Brandt, MD, FACC	Melissa Hicks, MD	Sean O'Connor, MD
Samantha Brothers, MD	Melissa "Red" Hoffman, MD	Stacey Olney, MS MD
Stephanie Call, MD	Tracy Hoorstra, CRNA	Bryan Overcarsh, MD, MPH
Michael Cho, MD	Phyllis Hope, MD	Justin Parker, DO
Colby Colasacco, MD	Lawson Z. Hunley, DO	David Pope, MD
Anthony Cooley, MD	David Jarrett, MD	Mark Rasmussen, PA
Norris Crigler, MD	Leigh Johanson, PA	Doug Roberts, CRNA
Walton Curl, MD	Caroline Holleck Kahle, MD	Jennie Savage, MD
Paul Davis, MD	Jonas Karlsson, MD, FACS	Alex Schneider, MD
Joseph Dement, MD	M.Ed Kelley, MD	William Shillinglaw, MD
Lucia Derks, MD	Michelle Kiser, MD	Courtney Sommer, MD
Alston "Trey" Dunbar, MD	Terence Kolb, MD	Myron W. Smith, III, MD
Christopher Elder, MD	Tammy Kopelman, MD	Peeter Soosaar, MD
Alan Feiler, MD	Michael LeCroy, MD	Nate Spell, MD
Jaime Fernandez, MD	Jamie Loggins, MD	Gregg Stashenko, MD
Chris Flanders, MD	James MacDonell, MD	Jesse Sulzer, MD
Brent Fisher, MD	Patricia Macopson, NP	Erik Thingvoll, MD
Stephen K. Funkhouser, D.O.	Richard Massen, MD	Danielle Walsh, MD
Kyle Gillett, Ph.D., LMFT	Travis McCoy, MD, FACOG	Eric Walker, PA
David Graham, MD	Melissa McKay, MD	Jana Watts, MD
Leslie Grayson, MD	Lindsee McPhail, MD	Patti Wheeler, MD
Michael Gower, MD	Pamela Meliski, MD	Matt Young, MD
Gordon Groh, MD		