

GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM®

March 12, 2024

TO: La Crosse Common Council Members

FR: Nathan Franklin, Director of External Affairs, Bellin and Gundersen Health System

RE: Item # 24-0190

For our elected partners:

Despite recent statements to the contrary, Gundersen Health System fully welcomed behavioral health services into the Seventh Street Scenic Bluffs Health Center.

The agreement between Gundersen and Scenic Bluffs detailed “dental health and related services” as the primary use, but knowing the community need, Gundersen made it clear behavioral health fell under our interpretation of the language. In fact, the accepted project proposal and design for the Seventh Street Scenic Bluffs Health Center included ample behavioral health space, numerous staff, and access to telehealth support. In addition, Gundersen offered lease pricing well below market rate, generous provisions that charged rent only for the portions of the building in active use, and unprecedented financial support through Gundersen Medical Foundation donors for renovations and the purchase of equipment.

Any assertion Gundersen did not go above and beyond to support the expansion of these services is simply not true. Termination was not our choice. Gundersen has successfully and continually collaborated with numerous local stakeholders to advance behavioral health services in our community and will continue to do so with trustworthy partners. Our commitment to the behavioral health and overall wellness of our neighbors is unmatched and unwavering.

Gundersen has no position on the item before the Council.