R-26-05

Resolution Asking HCA CEO Sam Hazen To Engage Directly With Stakeholders In Western North Carolina

WHEREAS, Mission Health, which includes Mission Hospital in Buncombe County and five satellite hospitals in Transylvania, Macon, Jackson, Mitchell, and McDowell Counties, is the healthcare backbone of Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Mission Hospital is the only Level I trauma center west of Charlotte and only tertiary care hospital in the 18 westernmost counties; and

WHEREAS, for profit, publicly traded HCA bought nonprofit Mission Health in 2019 and quickly made significant changes, including reducing Mission Hospital staff by the hundreds, closing primary care practices, and reducing many services previously offered; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of long-serving and highly skilled nurses and physicians, as well as numerous physician practices, have left Mission Health and especially Mission Hospital; and
WHEREAS, due to these staffing reductions and other management decisions, Mission Hospital has been cited by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for Immediate Jeopardy in 2021, 2024, 2025, and 2026; and

WHEREAS, Mission Hospital was found to have violated the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act in 2024 and 2025;

WHEREAS, other hospitals in the Mission Health system have also experienced regulatory censure, including Mission McDowell Hospital and Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine being cited for Immediate Jeopardy in 2021 and 2023, respectively; and

WHEREAS, HCA has failed to provide sufficient resources and support for its staff, has failed to act on recommendations from nurses, and has created a culture in which doctors, nurses and staff are hesitant to raise quality of care concerns with management; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sam Hazen, CEO of HCA, said at the time of purchase: “We are excited that Mission Health chose to be part of the HCA Healthcare family. We look forward to investing in western North Carolina and ensuring Mission Health’s 133-year tradition of caring continues for years to come. This is a model partnership and one we hope will be replicated to benefit many similar communities.”; and

WHEREAS, due to HCA's management, Mission Health's tradition of caring has been severely impaired; and

WHEREAS, HCA leaders, including Mission CEO Greg Lowe, have not met with community members at public forums or meaningfully engaged community stakeholders to discuss conditions at Mission Hospital; and

WHEREAS, HCA and Mission Hospital are not transparent or accountable to our community.

NOW THEREFORE, we call on Mr. Sam Hazen, as the leader of HCA, to come to Western North Carolina and meet with elected officials, healthcare advocates, and other community leaders, be accountable for HCA's decisions at Mission Health, and engage in a collaborative and transparent dialogue to develop a plan for long term, permanent improvement at Mission Hospital and throughout the Mission Health system.

Adopted this the 13th day of April 2026

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Mayor Preston Blakely

ATTEST:

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Christine Thompson, MMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk