

**HEALTH COMMISSION  
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
Resolution No. 15-8**

**DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF THE CLOSURE OF 32 SHORT-TERM SKILLED NURSING FACILITY  
BEDS AT ST. MARY'S MEDICAL CENTER ON THE HEATH CARE SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY**

WHEREAS, St. Mary's Medical Center, a non-profit hospital and member of Dignity Health, is an acute care hospital in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary's is currently licensed to operate 32 skilled nursing facility (SNF) beds and currently maintains approximately 7 staffed beds; and

WHEREAS, On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in compliance with the Community Health Care Planning Ordinance (Proposition Q), St. Mary's notified the Health Commission that it plans to close its Skilled Nursing Unit, eliminating SNF services on the campus; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary's has cited shifts in health care reimbursement for hospital-based programs, and substantial and prolonged financial losses of the Skilled Nursing Unit as reasons for closure; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary's SNF beds provide post-acute rehabilitative care on a short-term basis with an average length of stay of 12 days; and

WHEREAS, Short-term skilled nursing facility beds represent approximately (41%) of all of San Francisco's skilled nursing facility beds; and

WHEREAS, the great majority (73%) of short-term skilled nursing facility beds are in community-based skilled nursing facilities; and

WHEREAS, the number of hospital and community SNF beds in San Francisco has fallen by 22% since 2002; and

WHEREAS, the closure of the St. Mary's Hospital's SNF unit will require that community-based skilled nursing facilities, which provide the largest share of short-term skilled nursing care and are already running at high occupancy rates, provide post-acute care to patients who would have been served by St. Mary's Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, To prepare for the closure of their Skilled Nursing Unit and to maintain continuity of care for their patients transitioning to community-based skilled nursing care, St. Mary's health care providers, including hospitalists and wound care specialists, have begun following their patients during their stay in community skilled nursing facilities; and

WHEREAS, Community-based skilled nursing facilities have a high occupancy rate – 89%, which is higher than the statewide rate of 86% – leaving little room for surge or expansion in the face of growing need; and

WHEREAS, While institutional post-acute care continues to decrease, the availability of community-based post-acute care will need to rise to maintain the capacity to care for the population; and

WHEREAS, Data from the Health Care Services Master Plan indicates that despite a focus on increasing community-based options for long-term care, there may be an increased need for SNF beds in San Francisco in the future, specifically:

- Population trends show that San Francisco residents are older than California residents overall and that the population over 75 is expected to increase by almost two-thirds over the next two decades;
- San Francisco’s ratio of long-term care beds to the population is lower than that of the state while the long-term care bed occupancy rate is higher;

WHEREAS, Models of skilled nursing care are evolving to include more community- and home-based services and supports; and

WHEREAS, Reduction of more restrictive and more costly institutional post-acute care options in favor of community-based alternatives is consistent with national trends and preferences; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco medical community including St. Mary's Medical Center, should also continue to be involved in responding to the need of long term care services; and

WHEREAS, due to Health Care Reform, there is currently inadequate information regarding the current and future needs of San Franciscans for post-acute care services including short-term SNF beds; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with Proposition Q, the San Francisco Health Commission held public hearings on May 5, 2015 and May 19, 2015, regarding the closure of SNF beds at St. Mary’s Medical Center;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The closure of short-term SNF beds without ensuring an appropriate level of post-acute care services available may result in short-term skilled nursing needs of the community not being met.

FURTHER RESOLVED, The SFDPH is encouraged to work with other City agencies, local hospitals and community based organizations, to research the needs for short- term SNF and post-acute care services in San Francisco, and submit a report with recommendations back to the Health Commission within 6 months.

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Health Commission encourages St. Mary’s Medical Center to continue to explore community benefit investment in other community-based post acute care alternatives.

I hereby certify that the San Francisco Health Commission at its meeting of May 19, 2015 adopted the foregoing resolution.

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Mark Morewitz  
Executive Secretary to the Health Commission