



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGREES TO CITY REQUEST
TO PAUSE TRANSFERS AND DISCHARGES AT
LAGUNA HONDA HOSPITAL**

San Francisco, CA – Today the City announced that the transfers and discharges at Laguna Honda Hospital that been required by the Federal Government will be paused.

For the last several months, the City has been addressing a series of challenges at Laguna Honda Hospital that stemmed from inspections triggered by the San Francisco Department of Public Health's (DPH) self-reporting of a pair of non-fatal overdoses last year. As a result of these inspections, the Federal Government terminated its contract with Laguna Honda. In addition, the Federal Government has required that the facility wind down its patient population, while Laguna Honda pursues a recertification process to requalify for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicare and Medicaid funding.

At the time of the termination by the Federal Government, DPH proposed a termination and recertification process that would not require relocation of existing patients while DPH pursued Laguna Honda's recertification, and we were denied. DPH then asked for 18 months to ensure that patients were transferred or discharged in a safe and appropriate manner, but that proposal was also denied. In order to continue to receive any federal funds, CMS imposed a maximum of four months to close the facility and safely transfer or discharge patients. DPH also proposed that patients be transferred or discharged based on a tiered system, and yet again CMS rejected that idea, requiring that Laguna Honda transfer all patient populations simultaneously.

Today the federal and state government agreed to the City's urgent request to pause all transfers and discharges.

"Laguna Honda provides care for some of our most vulnerable residents, including those who are sadly at the end of their lives," said Mayor London Breed. "During COVID, Laguna Honda saw very few deaths in comparison to other skilled nursing facilities across the country because we prioritized patient health above all else. The transfers we've had to make as required by the federal government have been traumatic for residents and for their families. While I'm glad we've reached an agreement with the federal government to pause these transfers, it shouldn't have come to this. When we entered this recertification process, we asked for 18 months window to ensure that our residents did not receive any disruption of care at Laguna Honda. We were given four months, and we've seen the disastrous results of that requirement. We are ready and willing to confront any and all challenges we have to make Laguna Honda work, but that



commitment should not conflict with the care we have provided for so many for so many years. I want to thank Speaker Pelosi for her advocacy and support for the patients and families over the last several months. The residents of Laguna Honda and their families should come first in this process, and pausing the transfers for our highest needs residents is a start.”

“I am grateful that Laguna Honda patients and families can breathe a sigh of relief today,” said Supervisor Myrna Melgar, who represents District 7 where Laguna Honda Hospital is located. “It took many anxious months of desperate pleas from patients, families, advocates, and elected officials to reverse the ill-fated decision to require relocating frail residents at Laguna Honda at great risk to them. I hope CMS will continue to do the right thing and allow vulnerable patients to continue receiving care at Laguna Honda until the recertification process is completed. We cannot lose this Hospital. It is the beacon of hope for many families who have nowhere else to go for skilled nursing. I am committed to doing everything in my power to ensure that this does not happen and we save Laguna Honda. The Board of Supervisors joins Mayor Breed, Labor leaders, the Department of Public Health and families in unifying behind our collective effort to keep Laguna Honda open to serve San Francisco. We need more skilled nursing beds for our elderly and vulnerable residents, not less, so it is critical we preserve what we have.”

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