



**May 8, 2019**

Dear Councilmember,

**We urge the Council to restore the funding included in the Mayor’s budget to keep United Medical Center (UMC) open and serving the public and to strike any language that calls for the closing of UMC by date certain.** The current language severely endangers United Medical Center’s ability to stay open and provide health care to residents. As you know, UMC is the only hospital open east of the Anacostia River.

We are concerned that the Council’s view has been shaped in part by a very inaccurate number that has been circulated repeatedly regarding the usage of United Medical Center. The number in the range of 80 patients only accounts for a few parts of UMC and vastly undercounts the usage of this hospital.

Through conversations with nurses who are working in the hospital and are privileged to patient usage data from May 9, 2019, we have been able to provide a more accurate account of the patient load at UMC. **The total number of patients seen on a daily basis at UMC is about 400 – 500 a day.**

<b>Patients included in the reported daily census</b>	
Medical-Surgical	50
Telemetry	25
ICU	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Patients uncounted daily census</b>	
Behavioral Health	26
Skilled Nursing Facility*	100
Emergency (May 7, 2019, most recent data)	294
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Full Daily Total</b>	<b>503</b>

*\*exact totals for May 9, 2019 not available at this time, however these are based on recent occupancy*

**In fact, on Tuesday May 7, the UMC ER saw 294 patients.** The nurses report an average of 200 – 300 ER patients a day. That’s three times the number stated in the Council meeting the next day.

This hospital is meeting the emergency, behavioral health, long-term nursing, surgical, and myriad other needs for the residents of Wards 7 and 8. To imply that this hospital is under-utilized does a disservice to the critical medical services UMC provides every day. With the closing of Providence Hospital, the only other DC hospital outside of Northwest, it comes as no surprise that the hospital has high numbers of patients.

It was also implied that there was an unnecessary staffing ratio at UMC. It is true that the hospital is the largest employer in Ward 8, employing around 850 people. However, many of those staff members are not medical professionals including hospitality and security. While we do not have a current break down of all medical professionals including physicians, the number of nurses at UMC is 250.

A clear picture of what is happening at UMC has not be presented and investigated by the DC Council. **The Council should not made major structural and budgeting decisions regarding United Medical Center without full information.** The Council definitely should not rush this decision in the ten days they have been given before voting on the budget.

As we have expressed, we have grave concerns that steps are being taken to close UMC prematurely. This is reflected both in the limitation of funds and also in the intention to close UMC whether or not a new hospital is open. Many members of the Council recognize that it is unlikely that a new hospital will be built by the end of 2021, but the current language requires UMC to close by that time.

**We urge the Council to maintain the funding included in the Mayor's budget to keep United Medical Center open and serving the public and to strike any language that calls for the closing of UMC by date certain.**