To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
        Councilmember Lori Droste
        Councilmember Laurie Capitelli

Subject: Revised Resolution Opposing Sutter Health Corporation Plans to Cease Operations at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION:
That the Council adopt the attached revised resolution opposing Sutter Health Corporation plans to cease operations at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley.

BACKGROUND:
See resolution,

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:
Minimal.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Consistent with Berkeley’s Environmental Sustainability Goals and no negative impact.

CONTACT PERSON:
Councilmember Kriss Worthington 510-981-7170

Attachment:
1 Resolution Oppose Sutter Health Corporation’s Plan to Cease Operation
RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

Resolution to Oppose Sutter Health Corporation's Plan to Cease Acute Care Hospital Operations at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, Further Requesting City Departments to Identify Pending or Future Applications Sought in Furtherance of Such Closure and Report Such Applications.

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, has been providing “full service” Acute Care hospital services in Berkeley, the East Bay and in Alameda and other counties for decades, and

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center is licensed for 944 acute care beds with more than half of them in Berkeley, and 347 of those at the Ashby facility; and

WHEREAS, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center's Ashby facility is crucial for providing timely healthcare services for the people of Berkeley and cities beyond Berkeley's border; and

WHEREAS, from 2002 through 2015, records from CA's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, OSHPD, revealed very high utilization of acute care services at Alta Bates' Berkeley facility, including over one million total days that hospital beds were occupied; which consisted in part of the following:

- 559,136 days patients were treated in Medical units;
- 228,498 days babies treated in Neonatal Intensive Care;
- 103,157 babies delivered;
- 111,946 admissions through the Emergency Departments;
- 73,612 adult Critical Care patients treated; and

WHEREAS, these numbers do not reflect the full scope of the amount of patients treated at the Berkeley facility because census data reported to CA's OSHPD agency does not include patients in “observation” status despite stays of up to 48 hours with “observation” patients; and

WHEREAS, these numbers reflect only the Ashby facility and not the Alta Bates Summit census data at the Oakland Summit site; and

WHEREAS, Sutter Health Corporation has announced its intention to dramatically reduce services by closing the Alta Bates' Berkeley facility in light of SB 1953; and
WHEREAS, the consolidation of hospital services results in loss of services as happened when Alta Bates Hospital merged with Summit Medical Center in 2000, and despite Sutter Health arguing that services would be enhanced, not reduced, when many in the community opposed the merger at that time, Alta Bates Summit afterwards experienced the loss of many services in the past 15 years, overwhelmingly at the Alta Bates and Herrick campuses; and

WHEREAS, the national average for bed capacity per 1000 residents is 2.9 beds according to World Bank statistics. In Alameda County, the bed capacity is at 1.8 beds and neighboring Contra Costa at 1.4 beds, a figure that does not reflect the final phase of the 2015 closure of Doctor’s Medical Center in San Pablo; and

WHEREAS, many hospital departments are often at capacity, and all of the local Emergency Departments already have large delays in service, which will only be exacerbated by the merging of the two full-service Acute Care Hospitals with their Emergency Departments to one Oakland location, increasing even further wait and admission times; and

WHEREAS, the University of California, has 37,581 Undergraduate and Graduate students who depend heavily on hospital services at the Alta Bates campus, including the Alta Bates Emergency Department in close proximity to campus, to address the students' life-threatening illnesses and injuries, and need for medical care; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley, North Alameda, West Contra Costa area recently suffered the closure of an acute care hospital in San Pablo, and the loss of acute care hospital services as a result, and further, is subject to severe earthquakes, frequent urban interface with wild fires, industrial chemical releases and mass traffic casualties—all of which require emergency services; and

WHEREAS, when Berkeley’s first responders are mandated to travel to Summit Campus in Oakland, they are unavailable for service for the rest of Berkeley for prolonged periods of time presenting a significant danger to the lives of Berkeley residents, and forcing an unacceptable standard of healthcare upon them; and

WHEREAS, closures and relocations of corporations on the community, impacting an array of businesses including family-owned businesses, with losses often doubling or tripling those who either lost jobs or had to relocate; and

WHEREAS, when access to healthcare is made more difficult, patients often delay healthcare but also stop seeking the care that is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the stated mission of corporate Sutter Health is to “enhance the well-being of people in the communities we serve through a not-for-profit commitment to compassion and excellences” in health care services; and

WHEREAS, Sutter Health as a non-profit corporation pays little or no property taxes for
operations which are non-profit, such as its non-profit hospitals (as opposed to its for-profit operations) and is a highly profitable healthcare corporation whose total assets in the billions grow substantively each year, as shown:

- 2011: $11,820,000,000
- 2012: $12,390,000,000
- 2013: $14,215,000,000
- 2014: $14,290,000,000
- 2015: $14,344,000,000

WHEREAS, Sutter Health needs to live up to its stated mission, be held accountable for its actions, and provide the necessary healthcare for Berkeley residents, and must not be allowed to put profits before lives nor endanger the residents of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley City Council has a role and responsibility to provide resources to the public to promote and protect its health with no regional body researching the health needs of the greater community; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Berkeley oppose Sutter Health Corporation’s plan to close its acute care services at Alta Bates Hospital and calls upon Sutter Health to cease and desist all actions in furtherance of any and all plans to close Alta Bates hospital; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council shall establish open forums to inform and educate Berkeley residents of the possibility of Sutter Health’s seismically retrofitting Berkeley’s Alta Bates facility; shall ensure the residents of Berkeley are notified of any and all forums under the City of Berkeley’s purview; and ensure a full service acute care general hospital for future generations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments pledge to cooperate fully to facilitate this process such that it is expedited as much is legally permitted.

Exhibits
A: Sutter Plans Closure of Berkeley’s Alta Bates Hospital, ER
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