



**Foundation for Community Health's
Response to
OHS Proposed Final Decision to
Deny Nuvance's Request to
Terminate Inpatient Labor and
Delivery at Sharon Hospital**

The Connecticut Office of Health Strategy's (OHS) [proposed final decision](#) to deny Nuvance Health's request to close Sharon Hospital's Labor and Delivery services should be closely examined by all those interested, not only for the specific outcome of the decision, but also to evaluate OHS's commitment toward its stated mission on behalf of all Connecticut residents:

To implement comprehensive, data driven strategies that promote equal access to high quality health care, control costs and ensure better health for the people of Connecticut.

In this case, it is clear that OHS did focus on those elements highlighted above: promoting access to high quality care and containing costs for patients with the purpose of ensuring the health and wellbeing of Connecticut residents. This was evident in their due diligence process regarding this decision. OHS demonstrated their commitment by spending hours and hours gathering and listening to testimony from all voices in the community. They analyzed the detailed costs and operations information supplied directly by the hospital and other experts on the potential impact of this closure on the hospital and the local population. Lastly, they prioritized the Connecticut population that the state is most responsible for – those on Medicaid.

The latest news that Nuvance has decided to appeal the proposed decision indicates that they remain unwilling to consider developing innovative approaches to strengthen the hospital and support maternity services. Nevertheless, we will continue to support a collaborative approach in the belief that this proposed decision will most likely stand. We still believe that an open dialogue is our best hope to move forward and will continue to advocate for it.

In the meantime, we are moving forward with our efforts to increase access to primary care physicians and behavioral health services at the new health center that will open in North Canaan in the first quarter, 2024. Those services are also expected to add meaningful annual income to Sharon Hospital from physician and related diagnostic testing referrals. Community Health and Wellness Center is already in negotiations with Sharon Hospital for such referrals and other collaborative work.

It is the hope of those of us at Foundation for Community Health (FCH) that once the final decision is made, all stakeholders recognize this opportunity to come together to innovate, support and grow the healthcare services that we all vitally need. In keeping with our value and practice of bringing people together to work toward a common goal, FCH stands ready to act as the convener of all stakeholders to explore collaborative solutions and actions that would work best in our rural setting, ensuring the sustainability of all needed healthcare services in the community.