

Photos: Regional Medical Center nurses protest planned closure of maternity ward



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Aileen Tran, an ICU registered nurse, waves to a honking supporter while holding her son 15-month-old son Caleb outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)

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PUBLISHED: April 23, 2020 at 6:21 p.m. | UPDATED: May 28, 2020 at 7:56 a.m.

A correction to an earlier version of this article has been appended to the end of the article. Nurses and health-care workers gathered Thursday to protest the planned closure of Women's Services at Regional Medical Center in East San Jose.

"We're concerned about moms and babies of the East Side," said Maureen Zeman, a registered nurse in labor and delivery. "The distance from here to Good Sam or O'Connor (hospitals) is quite far and with traffic, there's going to be a lot of

emergencies that are going to arise because of the inability to get over to those other hospitals.”

A spokesperson for the facility, which is owned and managed by HCA Healthcare, said that patients in emergency circumstances will continue to be treated at Regional, rather than being sent to Good Samaritan Hospital, 14 miles away, or O’Connor Hospital, 7 miles away.

“If a mother is in labor and close to delivery, of course, Regional will deliver that baby,” said Sarah Sherwood, spokesperson for Regional Medical Center. “By law, we have to take any emergent patient, and we would anyway.”

Sherwood said the closure is being driven by health care trends: Birth rates have declined in San Jose since 2008, falling in line with a national decline.

“We have tried to save the (Obstetrics) department at Regional,” Sherwood said, “but ... it is not possible to keep the department open with an average of just two births a day.”

Patients are better served by doctors who perform services on a more frequent basis, Sherwood said. Good Sam had over 3600 births in 2019, she said.

State legislators have joined in calling for HCA to reverse its decision to shut down the unit May 31.

Assemblyman Ash Kalra tweeted on Wednesday that he, along with San Jose Assemblyman Kansen Chu and State Senator Jim Beall Jr., had sent the hospital’s owners a letter calling for the ward to stay open. “As (the) only hospital in east San Jose, we need to keep services open for expecting mothers & children,” Kalra added.

A Change.org petition protesting the closure had received nearly 12,000 signatures as of Thursday evening.

“Many of our patients don’t have prenatal care or have the ability to get to their doctor so they come here to seek adequate care,” Zeman said. “Women of child-bearing age have to go quite a distance to get the care they deserve, and we don’t think that’s fair.”



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Healthcare workers, mostly nurses, protest outside of Regional Medical Center shortly before being asked to leave the property by security in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Healthcare workers protest outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: A registered nurse hold a sign outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Nurses protest outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: San Jose City Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco speaks to healthcare workers, mostly nurses, in support of their protest outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



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SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Aileen Tran, an ICU registered nurse, holds a sign while holding her son 15-month-old son Caleb outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



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SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Maureen Zeman, a registered nurse in labor and delivery at Regional Medical Center, talks to the media outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



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SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Aileen Tran, an ICU registered nurse, with her son Caleb, 15-months, outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)



SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA - APRIL 23: Healthcare workers, mostly nurses, pose for a photograph after protesting outside of Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., on Thursday, April 23, 2020. They were protesting the planned closure of Women's Services. (Nhat V. Meyer/Bay Area News Group)

Correction, May 28, 2020: An earlier version of this article overstated the number of babies delivered at the hospital each year. Hospital spokesperson Sarah Sherwood said Regional had 719 births in 2019. The article also initially failed to seek a response from the hospital to complaints from its nurses. A response is now included.

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/04/23/photos-regional-medical-center-nurses-protest-planned-closure-of-maternity-ward/>