



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sharon Hospital announces strategic transformation

Plan focuses on deliberate growth and envisions a sustainable and vibrant future for Sharon Hospital

SHARON, Conn. — September 29, 2021 — At a community forum this evening, Sharon Hospital and Nuvance Health announced a transformative plan to best meet the evolving needs of patients, families, and staff while ensuring a vibrant future for the hospital. This strategic direction is the result of a deliberate years long planning process by Sharon Hospital and Nuvance Health to analyze how the Sharon community seeks care and chart a sustainable path forward in meeting the long-term needs of patients.

Sharon Hospital's transformation will invest in and strengthen the services identified as the community's greatest areas of need, while connecting patients with advanced care and services offered within the Nuvance Health system. The plan includes expanding primary and ambulatory care, investing in behavioral health, convening workgroups to evaluate opportunities for consolidation and phasing out underutilized service lines that are available at other Nuvance Health facilities.

Sharon Hospital's Board played a critical role in the evaluative process and has endorsed the transformative plan.

"As part of a nonprofit health system with a deep connection to our community, every decision we make is based on what is best for our patients and staff," said Dr. Mark Hirko, president of Sharon Hospital. "That is why we chose a path focused on deliberate growth to enhance the care our community needs most, while connecting our patients with Nuvance Health's network of advanced specialists for any services not offered at our facility. With that, we had to make difficult decisions around redesigns and closures of underused services to ensure that Sharon Hospital can serve our patients and families well into the future."

This plan enables Sharon Hospital and Nuvance Health to adapt with a changing healthcare landscape, which has endangered rural and community hospitals across the country. Over 180 rural and community hospitals have closed in the United States since 2005, and the Center for Health Care Quality and Payment Reform (CHQPR) has identified Sharon Hospital at a "high risk for closing."

"Sharon Hospital is a key member of Nuvance Health and we are deeply invested in its future success as part of our vision to expand access to care in Western Connecticut and the Hudson Valley," said Dr. John Murphy, president and CEO of Nuvance Health. "We look forward to continued collaboration with our staff and the Sharon community as we work to improve the health of every person we serve, ensuring all patients can access the services they need close to home."

The recorded session and a copy of the digital presentation are accessible on the website. Community members are encouraged to submit follow-up questions and concerns by emailing sharonhospital@nuvancehealth.org or calling (845) 554-1734 with their name and phone number.

This plan includes:

- **Expanding Primary & Ambulatory Care:** Sharon Hospital will pursue opportunities to expand its primary care footprint and ambulatory service offerings to best meet the current and future needs of the Sharon community. Investing in these services will allow Sharon Hospital to prevent, detect, monitor, and treat health issues earlier, improving patient outcomes and reducing the need for more complex care that requires a hospital stay.
- **Investing in Behavioral Health:** Sharon Hospital will expand their adult behavioral health offerings to fill a gap in care in the surrounding region. By expanding adult behavioral health offerings, Sharon Hospital can better meet the needs of our growing 65+ population and expand our services to adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the future.
- **Consolidating Inpatient Care Services to Capture Efficiencies in Staffing and Care:** Sharon Hospital will convene clinical and administrative work groups, including physicians and nurses, to develop a plan to effectively consolidate inpatient care services. These workgroups will ultimately allow for more effectively assigned staff and resources to better serve the needs of our patients, while keeping patients at Sharon Hospital whenever possible.
- **Phasing Out Labor & Delivery:** Sharon Hospital has seen fewer than 200 annual deliveries for the past four years, an average rate of fewer than one delivery per day, some days passing with no births at all in a fully staffed unit. An underused Labor & Delivery unit cannot be maintained while also ensuring Sharon Hospital can continue serving its patients and community in the long-term.

Sharon Hospital plans to close its Labor & Delivery unit, pending regulatory approval, phasing out these services over the course of eight to 12 months to allow all of today's expectant mothers who planned to deliver at Sharon Hospital to do so. Nuvance Health is committed to working with future mothers in the Sharon community to find the right facility for them, while understanding these decisions are ultimately a choice between each woman, her family, and her care team.

- **Consolidating Surgical Services to a More Efficient and Productive Model:** Sharon Hospital will convene work groups of administrative and clinical staff, including physicians and nurses, to develop an operational plan to evaluate the days and hours of operating room availability to improve the efficiency of the currently practiced surgical schedule.

The public can review additional details about the transformation [here](#). Sharon Hospital encourages community members to watch the recording of our September 29 community forum, which can be viewed [here](#).

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About Nuvance Health

Nuvance Health is a family of award-winning nonprofit hospitals and healthcare professionals in the Hudson Valley and western Connecticut. Nuvance Health combines highly skilled physicians, advanced facilities and technology and compassionate caregivers dedicated to providing quality care across a variety of services including the Cancer Institute, Heart and Vascular Institute, Neuroscience Institute and orthopedics, primary care and surgery.

Nuvance Health has convenient hospitals and outpatient locations including Danbury Hospital and its New Milford campus, Norwalk Hospital and Sharon Hospital in Connecticut; Northern Dutchess Hospital, Putnam Hospital and Vassar Brothers Medical Center in New York; and many primary and specialty care practices including The Heart Center — a leading provider of cardiology care — and three urgent care offices. Nuvance Health affiliates offer non-acute care including Home Care and the Thompson House for rehabilitation and skilled nursing services. Visit nuvancehealth.org for more information. TTY: 1-800-421-1220