



# WINDHAM UNITED TO SAVE OUR HEALTHCARE COALITION

**For Release:** February 11, 2022

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## **State Regulators Cite Hartford HealthCare Over Windham Hospital Maternity Services Cut**

*Community coalition hopeful enforcement action signals directive to health chain to restore Windham Hospital's labor and delivery care for region's mothers and babies.*

**Willimantic** – Advocates in the Windham United to Save our Healthcare Coalition (WUSH) are today reacting to fines levied against Hartford HealthCare (HHC) for unlawfully terminating the community's local maternity services. The Office of Health Strategy (OHS) on Wednesday sent notice of the regulatory action to Hartford HealthCare (HHC), the network that owns and operates Windham Community Memorial Hospital (WCMH).

"This fine shows that the state's attorneys see the need for services like labor and delivery in all Connecticut communities," said coalition member Leah Ralls "While the future of the maternity unit still remains unanswered, this is an important step toward accountability for this chain's attempt to flout the law," added Ralls, president of the Windham/Willimantic NAACP branch.

In a letter to HHC's strategic planning director, OHS affirmed the chain is in violation of Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) 19a-638(a). The law requires a Certificate of Need (CON) be issued by OHS prior to "the termination of inpatient or outpatient services offered by a hospital." HHC's penalty is \$151,000 and \$1,000 for each day they remain out of compliance with state law by failing to restore WCMH's inpatient obstetric services.

"Our objective remains the same as it's been since the chain cruelly cut our community's maternity care," said coalition member Lynne Ide. "Full, permanent re-opening of the labor and delivery unit is the only just outcome for the region's families," added Ide, director of Program and Policy at Universal Health Care Foundation of CT.

The fines do not represent a final resolution, which is still pending as OHS reviews testimony and evidence gathered during and since conducting a CON hearing last fall. HHC in its presentation at the time indicated its intention to keep WCMH's maternity unit shuttered indefinitely, despite the overwhelming public outcry led by WUSH.

"It shouldn't take state regulators slapping these executives with fines for the chain to do the right thing," said coalition member Brenda Buchbinder. "After all, the sum is a pittance to Hartford HealthCare's CEO and top brass. They should have long ago done the right thing and restored our community's maternity ward," added Buchbinder, vice president of Natchaug Hospital Unions United, AFT Local 5052.

In September of 2020, HHC executives officially filed for approval to terminate WCMH's labor and delivery services with OHS, 17 months after hatching their scheme to do so. For nearly two years, mothers and babies have been forced to seek inpatient obstetric services at facilities far from their homes and at unnecessary personal risk.

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Link –

[Office of Health Strategy February 8, 2022 Notice: "Windham Hospital's Termination of Inpatient Obstetric Services"](#)

## ORGANIZATIONS

AFT Connecticut  
CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG)  
Hartford Organization of Professional Employees (HOPE) Unions  
Generations Family Healthcare  
NARAL Pro-Choice CT  
Northeast Connecticut Grassroots Group  
Planned Parenthood CT & RI  
Quiet Corner Shouts  
The Neighbor Fund  
Universal Health Care Foundation of CT  
Vota Boricua  
We the People Willimantic  
Windham/Willimantic NAACP

