



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
332 Dirksen Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter Welch
2187 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

April 14th, 2022

Dear Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch,

I am writing in support of Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital's application for a Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding request. These funds will allow Grace Cottage to replace its 1840s-era primary care clinic building with a new modern and energy-efficient medical office building. The facility currently operates with 13 medical professionals and is located in two antiquated houses connected by a narrow hallway. When one considers that Grace Cottage has 28,000 patient visits per year, it's clear that a more accommodating facility is necessary.

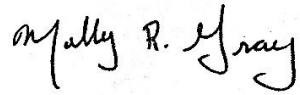
Despite consideration in recent years, a lack of funding thus far has prevented Grace Cottage from replacing the two-house clinic. Now, with a generous \$5M donor pledge and a USDA Rural Development Community Facilities loan application being submitted, this project can at last be realized. While Grace Cottage expects to be approved for a loan for this project, a federal appropriation would greatly reduce the amount of the loan, saving money for patient care and upgraded equipment that could better serve Vermonters.

Of Grace Cottage's 8,550 primary care patients, 30% are covered by Medicaid, and 36% are insured through Medicare. During FY21, Grace Cottage provided \$325,976 in free or reduced-fee care to patients who qualified. Each year, Grace Cottage must find a way to close this gap between the cost of care and payments and reimbursements.

Grace Cottage Family Health is a federally- designated Rural Health Clinic in Townshend, VT, serving thousands of Vermont residents from 25 area towns. Most patients live in Windham County, but Vermonters from neighboring counties receive care there as well. Of the 25 towns served, 11 are federally-designated "Medically Underserved Areas" which lack access to local health care without Grace Cottage. Grace Cottage Family Health is a precious link between the needs of the community, and primary and preventative care.

As a non-profit Rural Health Clinic, Grace Cottage relies on successful fundraising to keep the doors open. This one-time endeavor to support Vermonter's access to quality care requires significant financial support and I hope that you will strongly consider this appropriation request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly R. Gray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Gray

Vermont Lieutenant Governor