



Tim Hingtgen, CEO, Community Health Systems

Alec Grabowski, CEO, Lake Norman Regional Medical Center and Davis Regional Medical Center

Chris Peek, President, CEO, CaroMont Health

Shawn Howerton, CEO, Chief Medical Officer, Sampson Regional Medical Center

Greg Lowe, President, NC Division, HCA Healthcare

September 30, 2024

Dear Hospital Leaders, Presidents, and CEOs,

As Executive Directors of community-based organizations around the state dedicated to health equity and affordable and accessible health care for the people of North Carolina, **we are urging you to follow the exemplary leadership and example set forth by Advocate Health in cancelling liens for thousands of homeowners and forgiving all outstanding medical debt associated with those liens.**

By cancelling liens for homeowners across the state, you can demonstrate your commitment to our shared goals of ensuring better health outcomes, centering whole-person health, and creating stronger communities. **The home is a vital cornerstone of the American dream, upward economic mobility, and intergenerational wealth for families.** Getting sick or into an accident is already stressful enough, but to lose equity in the family home because of an accident or illness is nothing short of devastating.

With Advocate Health leading the way in cancelling liens and forgiving medical debt from those liens, patients around the state are looking to you as a hospital leader to follow suit and make their families and homes whole again. Many of the homeowners who have lost substantial equity in their home due to medical debt and high interest rates are older adults, people of color, and people with lower incomes.¹ To lose equity in a home from medical debt after decades of dutifully paying a mortgage and preparing for retirement is an indignity that no one should have to experience. **We are urging you to live up to your mission of taking care of patients, restoring their health, and maintaining dignity for all who seek your care.**

Patients like [Terry Belk whose story has been covered extensively in the media](#) received a lifechanging call from Advocate Health recently, when they notified him of their decision to cancel all liens and forgive all debt associated with those liens. **There are thousands of other patients like Mr. Belk who are counting on you and your hospital to make that lifechanging call.**

Sincerely,

Pat McCoy, Action NC

Erin Gallagher, Amnesty International Local Group 213

Erin Storie, Care Share Health Alliance

Alanna Davis, Carolina Jews for Justice

Todd Zimmer, Down Home North Carolina

Dawn Blagrove, Emancipate NC

Mary White, Faith Health Caucus

Howard Eisenson, MD, Health Care For All, NC

George Bohmfalk, MD, Health Care Justice NC

Joel Gallagher, Indivisible Guilford County

Italo Medelius, Justice For All Party

Julie Hills-Nichols, League of Women Voters of Lower Cape Fear

Beth Messersmith, MomsRising

Maggie Blunk, North Carolina AIDS Action Network

Dr. Jovita Lee, North Carolina Black Alliance

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland, North Carolina Council of Churches

¹ Richman, B. Greene, S. Chen, S. Havlak J. "Hospitals Suing Patients, How Hospitals Use N.C. Courts to Collect Medical Debt" (August 2023).

Reggie Shuford, North Carolina Justice Center

Deborah Maxell, North Carolina NAACP

Gailya Paliga, North Carolina National Organization for Women

Jillian Riley, Planned Parenthood South Atlantic

Tara Romano, Pro-Choice North Carolina

Thomas Kaluzynski, SEARCH WNC

George Friday, Southern Anti Racism Network

Eleanor Greene, MD, MP, Triad Women's Center

Rev. Lisa Garcia-Sampson, Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry of NC

Italo Medelius, Justice for All Party of North Carolina