

Chris O'Brien

From: Jacquart, Samantha (BHDDH) <Samantha.Jacquart@bhddh.ri.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 1:32 PM
To: Chris O'Brien
Subject: Testimony Governor's FY 2021 Budget

I am writing the email as I do know that currently the plan is to keep Zambarano Hospital open, and I would like that to stay the plan!

I have been coming to this campus my entire life. My mother has worked here since I was born and continues too, and for 5 years I have been working here as well. I have seen Zambarano in its prime; when the gardens were filled with flowers and vegetables were growing everywhere! I remember helping and accompanying patients as they rode through or just hung around to converse. With the beautiful views out every patient window, even on their worst day, they see beauty and look forward to taking a stroll around the campus or now venture down to the dock made to overlook Wallum lake; weather permitting. I don't think you can compare any other "hospital" in terms of campuses. This hospital was originally its own town, literally, it had a store, bowling alley, pool, along with many other conveniences. Staff even had buildings to live in, students lived here during their training, doctors stayed as well as some workers when the weather was too bad to drive home. I was recently at an appointment and I was asked where I worked, I said Zambarano Hospital. The doctors face lit up (even through her mask) and said oh my, I can remember living there for 3 months during my nursing clinicals. She went on to explain walking through the tunnels to the cafeteria and all this place offered!! She explains how much enjoyment they had, even remembering a specific patient playing Billy Joel over and over on their radio.

Through the years Zambarano, has seen some decline in upkeep, at no fault of its own. This building and campus being utilized since it was built in 1904, holds so many memories for the community. This atmosphere still holds the same family type of atmosphere. Maybe it is the original photos on the walls in the main hall, or some areas still looking the same as they once did! Also, some of these patients have lived here most of their lives, this is not just a hospital but their home. As someone who was a CNA that cared for these patients at one time; whether coming from Cranston Unit, Hospital, or other nursing facility I have had so many tell me the comfort level they have in the care they receive here at Zambarano verse other facilities they have been in. They feel like this is home and not just a facility. We have a full time Therapeutic recreation department that does an amazing job at coordinating not only daily activities Monday through Friday but also, we have an auditorium that all patients and family come for holiday parties with live music, food and raffles to benefit Patients for Progress. Patients for Progress was started by a well-known patient to Zambarano but also the entire community! He even came to my school when I was a child to talk about his condition, and answer questions from the children. In the summer Cranston busses patients for our Annual Music Festival this has been ongoing for around 20 years and something not only patients, but family members and staff enjoy. We also have cookouts throughout the summer for each floor and a family appreciation day cookout, where families of the patients and even some staff come to enjoy a cookout by the water.

We have had workers come here and are surprised by the type of diagnosis or extent of disabilities, sometimes almost intimidated, as these conditions/disabilities are not cared for at all facilities. Many don't realize that even though a patient may not speak, some can understand and may even have their own way of communicating. We understand here, the intimidating aspect of caring for patients with conditions not seen normally or some of the worst-case scenarios but we take great pride in the level of care we give each and every patient. We are a community of our own here at Zambarano, and I think being so far from the hustle and bustle makes this community and campus the best place for the patients we care for. With some much-needed funding, getting this somewhat neglected/forgotten building up to current safety standards, you too, can see the beauty this campus offers. This campus and community here have so many more years of memories to be made. I can speak for myself and others when I say, we are ready to see this campus back in bloom.

Thank you so much for your time,