My name is Margaret Ngai. I am a registered nurse working in an inpatient psychiatric hospital, a Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner student, and a concerned citizen.

I write to you today urging you to keep the Junction City psychiatric hospital open.

Oregon has one of the highest prevalences of mental illness in the country. We are ranked last, or close to last nationally on meeting the needs of the Oregon community who experience mental illness (Mental Health America, 2017). We have epidemic levels of suicide compared to other states (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2014). Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people age 5-34, and the 9th leading cause of death overall, in Oregon (Oregon Health Authority, 2015). There is a serious shortage of psychiatric placements both in hospitals and community settings, and a serious shortage of mental health providers.

The patients receiving care at the Junction City psychiatric hospital have severe and persistent mental illness with a very high level of acuity. Even in our fragmented system, these individuals have been identified as needing the highest level of care available. Without a plan to additionally fund community mental health services at a level that could provide the care these patients need, many of these individuals will end up homeless, in prisons, or waiting indefinitely in local emergency departments, likley on Oregon Health Plan dollars. The patients at the Junction City psychiatric hospital are members of our community who deserve to receive the healthcare that they desperately need. People living with mental illness are consistently pushed to the margins of society and live daily with the stigma of mental illness in a culture that regularly devalues psychiatric illness. I understand that there are difficult decisions to make, and

without dramatic revenue reform services need to be cut from somewhere. Ultimately, we have

a responsibility to these underserved members of our community to first do no harm.

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