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April 21, 2023

Submitted electronically via ccc.pilot@boston.gov

Councilor Liz Breadon, Chair
City Council Committee on PILOT Agreements, Institutional & Government Relations
Boston City Council
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-2043

RE: City Council Hearing on Docket #0414: Order for a hearing regarding targeted coordination of community benefits in the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program

Dear Councilor Breadon:

The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals, on behalf of our 12 member hospitals, appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on the Community Benefits programming and community engagement that our teaching hospitals are engaged in daily. The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH) is a non-profit organization that brings together teaching hospitals across Greater Boston to collaborate in several areas, including community benefits, research, emergency preparedness and management, emergency medical services, workforce development, and other areas. We are privileged to partner with the City of Boston's Public Health Commission, Office of Health and Human Services, and Boston EMS in a number of these areas.

In 2021, in advance of the Council's previous hearing on this topic, we shared a [report](#) with you that provides an important snapshot of the robust community benefits programming that our non-profit hospitals are engaged in across a wide variety of areas, including workforce development, violence prevention, intervention and response, and community health and wellness. These programs are informed by robust community engagement and community health needs assessments that guide our activities and investments in priorities that are identified by the community, respond to the lived experience and needs of Boston neighborhoods, and reflect our overarching commitment to achieving racial and ethnic health equity. These programs also strategically match the resources and expertise of our teaching hospitals with the identified needs of the Boston neighborhoods that surround them and reach every neighborhood in the City of Boston.

Our hospitals remain steadfastly committed to the City's voluntary PILOT program – one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation – with widescale participation across our hospitals. While the past three years have been extraordinarily difficult for our hospitals – and especially, our patients and their families, and our extraordinary frontline workforce – we remain committed to the City of Boston PILOT program. This commitment continues even as we endured unprecedented financial losses and pressure on our own budgets to respond to the COVID-19

pandemic – committing every waking hour and all available resources -- to meet the needs of our patients, our workforce, and our neighborhoods – which in many ways, has never been greater. Over the past three years, our institutions doubled down on our long-held and deep relationships and commitment to the patients and communities we serve throughout the City. We partnered with local community-based organizations to stand up community-based testing and vaccination clinics; to ensure access to nutritious food; and to care for the City's most vulnerable residents in need of care, respite, or isolation. We deployed every available technology and resource to continue to care for patients in their homes and in safe environments. We harnessed the skill and resiliency of our workforce to meet new and otherwise unmet needs. And we unleashed the full power of our research enterprises to identify potential treatments, vaccines, and therapeutic strategies intended to heal each and every patient in our care.

Since the PILOT program's inception in 2012 and through FY2022, our hospitals have contributed more than \$174 million in cash contributions to the City of Boston and expended at least \$207 million in community benefits programs that directly benefit City of Boston residents. It is important to note that these community benefits expenditures are not exhaustive of all our investments, but they do provide a critical snapshot of the depth of our commitment to our neighborhoods and the relationships we have built with local community-based organizations over decades.

Our hospitals also participate in a larger community driven collaborative – the Boston CHNA-CHIP Collaborative. We are so pleased that the Boston Public Health Commission has begun providing staff leadership and support for this Collaborative, thanks to funding provided by the hospitals, community health centers, and community organizations that are part of the collaborative. This collaborative brings together community members, labor representatives, community health centers, community development corporations, and the Boston Public Health Commission in a shared effort to engage with the community, identify priorities to improve health, and collaborate on our community health improvement plans.

We are convinced that the success of the City's voluntary PILOT program to date stems from a sense of shared responsibility, partnership, and collaboration we have maintained with our partners in the City of Boston. At the program's inception, we came together with a shared sense of purpose and a shared sense of responsibility: non-profit organizations, labor, community members, tax experts, and many other stakeholders worked together over many months to create a transparent, reliable, accountable, and voluntary PILOT program that recognizes both the City's fiscal needs as well as the unique charitable and economic contributions of the non-profit sector to our surrounding neighborhoods and communities. That sense of shared purpose and shared responsibility, as well as continued stakeholder collaboration, will be the hallmark of the program's continued and future success.

We are proud of our community benefits commitments throughout the City of Boston. Building on our unique missions, expertise, service offerings, and surrounding communities – our institutions have created robust, successful, and meaningful community engagement opportunities and community benefits programs in collaboration with the neighborhoods and communities we serve. Indeed, those partnerships and relationships built over many years were critical to our effective COVID-19 response.

We are open to continued efforts to make our community engagement and community benefits efforts more transparent to both the City and the communities we serve, and look forward to continued engagement with you on this important issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration with you into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia McMullin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patricia" and last name "McMullin" clearly legible.

Patricia McMullin
Executive Director
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals

CC: Councilor Kenzie Bok, Vice Chair
Councilor Michael Flaherty
Councilor Erin Murphy
Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune