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January 25, 2023

Delegate Sam Rasoul
Virginia House of Delegates, 11th District
P.O. Box 13842
Roanoke, Virginia 24037

Dear Delegate Rasoul,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of United Way of Roanoke Valley, I am writing to express our support for HB2192, with the goal of transforming Catawba Hospital into a state-of-the-art facility addressing the full spectrum of substance use disorder treatment, recovery services, and behavioral health services necessary to meet the growing need in our region.

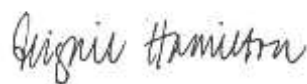
Just recently, the Roanoke Valley Collective Response completed Building on Hope, a white paper that analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on the opioid addiction crisis in the Roanoke Valley. The report notes an overall increase of 30% in overdose rates nationwide, a 9% increase in adults reporting in adults reporting issues with depression or anxiety in 2021 over 2018 as identified in Carilion Clinic's Community Health Survey, and a sharp increase in compassion fatigue experienced by the region's caregivers and public safety staff, just to list a few of the many impacts.

Addiction, substance abuse disorders, and mental illness are often among the most significant barriers to housing and employment – which are key to attaining financial stability. A reinvigorated and well-resourced Catawba Hospital would be a vital tool in meeting the growing need for mental health services, and facilitate access to others. Our United Way's vision to elevate 10,000 families to self-sufficiency seeks to impact residents in the geographic area contiguous to Catawba Hospital, and would undoubtedly be a resource for many that we serve.

Our United Way is fully supportive of HB2192. We are happy to participate in the next steps in the process to the extent we are able, and are eager to see the results of this important and timely work.

Thank you for your leadership in this area of need.

Sincerely,



Abby V. Hamilton
President and CEO