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An Act Directing That the Towns Constituting Hospital Administrative District No. 4 Hold a Vote on the Proposed Merger with Northern Light Health

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, Hospital Administrative District No. 4, established pursuant to Private and Special Law 1973, chapter 76, is composed of the member communities of Abbot, Atkinson, Bradford, Cambridge, Dexter, Dover-Foxcroft, Guilford, Milo, Monson, Parkman, Sangerville, Sebec and Willimantic; and

Whereas, the board of directors of the district has determined that Mayo Regional Hospital, which is the hospital serving the communities in the district, is unable to continue operation in a financially sustainable manner as an independent hospital and that the best way to ensure access to necessary, high-quality, affordable health care for the people served by Mayo Regional Hospital is for the district to merge with Northern Light Health, a larger nonprofit health care system; and

Whereas, in order for such a merger to take place, the Legislature must amend the charter for the district; and

Whereas, before the legislative delegations representing the affected communities pursue legislation to amend the charter to facilitate such a merger, it is important to solicit input from the affected communities; and

Whereas, this legislation directs the towns of Abbot, Atkinson, Bradford, Cambridge, Dexter, Dover-Foxcroft, Guilford, Milo, Monson, Parkman, Sangerville, Sebec and Willimantic to each hold a vote on the proposed merger by April 30, 2019 and transmit the results of the vote to the board of directors of the district; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. Special advisory vote on merger of Hospital Administrative District No. 4. Notwithstanding any applicable notice requirements, each of the towns of Abbot, Atkinson, Bradford, Cambridge, Dexter, Dover-Foxcroft, Guilford, Milo, Monson, Parkman, Sangerville, Sebec and Willimantic shall hold an advisory vote no later than April 30, 2019 on the proposed merger of Hospital Administrative District No. 4 with Northern Light Health, in accordance with the agreement and plan of merger dated February 27, 2019 between Hospital Administrative District No. 4 and Northern Light Health. Unless a town's charter otherwise provides, the vote must be taken at a town meeting. The municipal officers of each town shall invite the inhabitants of the town to give their opinion on this question by voting on the following:

"Do you favor the merger of Hospital Administrative District No. 4, which is served by Mayo Regional Hospital, with Northern Light Health, a Maine nonprofit corporation, in accordance with the agreement and plan of merger between Hospital Administrative District No. 4 and Northern Light Health dated February 27, 2019, and amending the Hospital Administrative District No. 4 charter in order to facilitate the completion of the merger?"

The results of the vote in each town must be declared by the municipal officers of the town and transmitted to the board of directors of Hospital Administrative District No. 4.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill requires that, notwithstanding any applicable notice requirements, each of the towns of Abbot, Atkinson, Bradford, Cambridge, Dexter, Dover-Foxcroft, Guilford, Milo, Monson, Parkman, Sangerville, Sebec and Willimantic hold an advisory vote no later than April 30, 2019 on the proposed merger of Hospital Administrative District No. 4 with Northern Light Health. Unless a town's charter otherwise provides, the vote must be taken at a town meeting. The results of the vote in each town must be declared by the municipal officers of the town and transmitted to the board of directors of Hospital Administrative District No. 4.