

Sutter Offers Best Hope for MGH

To the editor:

Having served from 1995 through 2005 on the Board of Directors of St. Luke's Hospital, San Francisco, a 130-year-old institution, four of those as vice chairman or chairman, I learned a great deal about the complexity of operating a hospital these days. We were in financial difficulty and in 2000 became an affiliate of Sutter Health. During 2005 my wife was admitted to Marin General five different times through the emergency room and stayed from three to five days.

Sutter's reputation in Marin was smeared by a handful of people with personal grudges, contrary to the objective evaluation of its quality. Our experience was very good.

The Marin Healthcare District Board, which owns the hospital, and Sutter went through numerous litigations and finally negotiated an agreement to terminate Sutter's lease of the hospital early, with the understanding that Sutter intends to continue offering services, such as Novato Community Hospital, in Marin.

Sutter may not be perfect but it stands for quality, integrity and transparency for and with the public. In the Bay area their affiliates, CPMC in San Francisco, Mills Peninsula in San Mateo County, Palo Alto Medical Foundation in Palo Alto and Alta Bates Hospital in the East Bay are all top-rated.

The Marin Grand Jury evaluated the Marin Healthcare District Board dysfunctional in a 2005 report.

There is no way Marin General Hospital can compete with Kaiser and Sutter in Marin under the control of the Marin Healthcare District. We need Sutter to take over MGH in order to save it.

— Dan King