



August 26, 2021

*Via E-Mail: [ljordan@fayetteville-ar.gov](mailto:ljordan@fayetteville-ar.gov)*

Mayor Lioneld Jordan  
City of Fayetteville  
113 W. Mountain Street  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

*Via E-Mail: [martisharkey@cox.net](mailto:martisharkey@cox.net)*

Marti Sharkey, M.D.  
City of Fayetteville  
113 W. Mountain Street  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

*Via E-Mail: [mayor@rogersar.gov](mailto:mayor@rogersar.gov)*

Mayor Greg Hines  
Rogers City Hall  
301 W Chestnut Dr.  
Rogers, Arkansas 72756

*Via E-Mail: [cfrobins@uark.edu](mailto:cfrobins@uark.edu)*

Interim Chancellor Charles Robinson  
University of Arkansas  
425 Administration Building  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

*Via E-Mail: [tommy@bikesbluesandbbq.org](mailto:tommy@bikesbluesandbbq.org), [info@bikesbluesandbbq.org](mailto:info@bikesbluesandbbq.org)*

Tommy Sisemore, Executive Director  
Bikes Blues and BBQ, Inc.  
PO Box 712  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702

Dear Mayor Jordan, Dr. Sharkey, Mayor Hines, Interim Chancellor Robinson and Mr. Sisemore:

I write on behalf of Washington Regional Medical Center to request postponement of the annual Bikes, Blues and BBQ motorcycle rally. To hold such an event at a moment when our region's healthcare systems are overwhelmed responding to the latest surge in hospitalizations resulting from the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus is to invite disaster. In short, our region's hospitals have no way to accommodate the additional traumas that always occasion that event, let alone the additional COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations that are likely to accompany an event where 300,000 congregate in close proximity. Today, like many days of late, every Emergency Department in our region is at capacity. We have many patients awaiting admission for beds that don't currently exist. Our Critical Care units are at capacity and that is for COVID and non-COVID patients alike. This status has been present for several weeks now with little hope for relief. The forecast released this week by the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health does not predict any significant let-up prior to the time of BBB.

**Washington Regional Medical System**

3215 N. North Hills Blvd. | Fayetteville, AR 72703 | 479.463.1000 | [wregional.com](http://wregional.com)



Historically, our hospital has ramped up our Emergency Department and Trauma staff to cover BB&B related trauma cases. We simply don't have the luxury of doing that this year. All our available staff are already working way beyond normal capacities to deal with the pandemic surge. As we warned our community on July 21, 2021, our healthcare systems are at capacity and there is significant likelihood that we will be unable to accommodate the usual incidence of traumas, strokes and other emergent conditions that regularly occur within our community. The additional volumes realized in a normal year of BB&B make that all the more likely.

While we all have grown weary of public health restrictions, we can't ignore the fact that our region is now at the height of this public health emergency. Our staff are pushed to the limit NOW. Adding the additional patients that will inevitably come with BB&B will push us beyond that limit. Understand that we are the region's only Level 2 trauma center and the only Comprehensive Stroke Center outside of Little Rock. There will be no way to provide the level of care required by our community if our community's leaders push forward with this event. We are currently at the darkest hour of this public health emergency. Our staff is exhausted. The message being sent regarding our community's priorities if this event is permitted to move forward couldn't be more tone deaf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David G. Ratcliff, MD".

David G. Ratcliff, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
Patient Safety Officer  
Washington Regional Medical Center