



An Affiliate of the University of Chicago Medical Center

800 East 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60615-4906
T (773) 702-0660 F (773) 702-4356

www.friendfhc.com

April 12, 2011

10-078

RECEIVED

APR 15 2011

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Mr. Dale Galassie
Acting Chairman
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Chairman Galassie:

HRSA Announcement: Update: Partnership for Patients I am submitting this letter in support of the Cook County Hospitals and Health System CON application to discontinue inpatient services at Oak Forest Hospital. By permitting Cook County to reallocate health care resources to a "Regional Outpatient Center" on the Oak Forest campus, the entire county safety net system will be strengthened through a substantial increase in access to essential specialty medical care and diagnostic testing for medically underserved residents.

Friend Family Health Center, Inc. has been partners with Cook County Health and Hospitals System for 14 years.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), we are a community-based provider of primary and preventative health care services. As you know, our patients are largely Medicaid beneficiaries and uninsured individuals. We currently rely on our partnership with Cook County to increase access to specialty medical care and diagnostic testing—one of the most challenging access issues for those of us who serve medically underserved patient populations. In 2010, for example, Cook County accepted and served almost 35,000 specialty care and diagnostic testing referrals from more than 70 FQHCs and other safety net providers in Cook County.

As much as Cook County already has done to increase specialty care and diagnostic access for our patients, there is still a significant unmet need. With the expansion of those services at Oak Forest campus, our patients will experience significantly reduced wait times, and those who reside in the Southern Cook County suburbs will be able to receive these services without traveling to the John H. Stroger Hospital campus. FFHC's goal is to provide continuance access to quality healthcare to uninsured and underinsured residents throughout various Southside communities.

We urge your immediate approval of the CON application, so that the establishment of a comprehensive safety net regional outpatient center at Oak Forest can become a reality.

Sincerely,

Wayne Moyer, CEO