



DuPage
County
Illinois

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
2nd Floor, 525 West Jefferson St
Springfield, IL 62761

December 5th, 2012

Dear Review Board

NAMI DuPage, the largest affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Illinois is greatly concerned about the proposed closure of your 18 bed behavioral health unit. We believe that there is already a serious shortage of psychiatric beds serving the DuPage community and that this proposal would put unfair and excessive demands on the remaining community hospitals.

While we recognize that these are difficult economic times, cutting services for a population that is already grossly underserved is both dangerous and shortsighted. Daily we hear from family members that their loved ones are being admitted onto in-patient units for shorter and shorter time periods leading to the revolving door syndrome. The stays are shorter to accommodate the increasing rate of individuals with mental illnesses requiring treatment. Our community hospitals do a wonderful job with the resources they have but a lack of beds leads to a far longer stay in the ER, increasing the anxiety of both patient and families.

Patients are being discharged before they are ready with little or no follow up support. We hear of many situations where a patient has been hospitalized as much as seven or eight times over a six month period. If there were more beds available the community hospitals would not be so pressured to discharge patients before they are really stable.

We at NAMI DuPage ask you to seriously reconsider this closure. If this closure occurs we believe that we will see an increase in those with mental illnesses facing multiple short term hospitalizations, homelessness and incarceration in our already overcrowded county jail. This clearly is not conducive to long term recovery which is our goal, and that of every mental health professional.

Outpatient treatment has great value, but only if the proper care and treatment is available for those that need to be treated first on an inpatient unit. Sometimes people need the structure of inpatient for stabilization, safety and to give the families a chance to re-group. When the patient has not had a chance to really stabilize there is an additional burden placed on the caregiver to try and arrange for the still psychotic family member to attend an outpatient program. Patients want and need to go to a place with a full continuum of care, if they are treated in one

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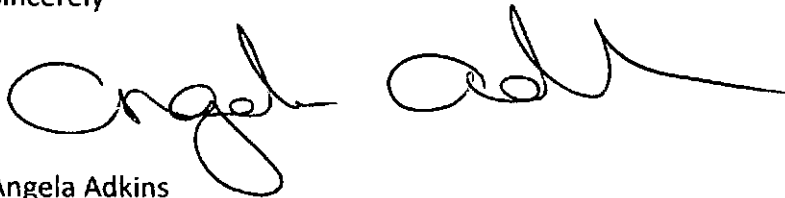
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hospital and expected to attend an outpatient program at another the outcomes are less likely to be as positive. There are already inadequate services in the community to support many of these individuals, many services that were available have also experienced cuts and in many cases the programs no longer offered.

We are also facing the possible closure of some of our state hospital acute civil beds, which, if this were to happen will further burden the community hospitals. We ask that you give as much respect and regard for people with mental illnesses as you do for those suffering from cancer or heart disease and let them have the treatment they deserve; we need more beds not fewer.

We urge you to reconsider and be a solution to the problem that our community is facing and not give up on these individuals. They need you.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela Adkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Angela Adkins
Executive Director

CC: Joel Herter, Chairman Board of Trustees, Elmhurst Memorial Hospital
CC: Dr. Don Hoffman, Chairman Behavioral Health Advisory Board
CC: MaryLynn Clark, Illinois Hospital Association
CC: Mayor Pete DiCianni, City of Elmhurst
CC: Steve Neubauer, Chief of Police, Elmhurst Police Department
CC: Michael D. Kopp, Fire Chief, Elmhurst Fire Department

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