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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
2nd Floor
525 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, Illinois 62761
Fax 217-785-4111

RE: Application 15-039 Rockford Memorial Hospital Rockford Memorial Hospital
Establish a second hospital on Riverside Blvd to be licensed under
Rockford Memorial Hospital - Rockton.

Dear Board:

I am writing to suggest plans by Rockford Memorial to build a second hospital here should be denied.

My perspective is based on frontline involvement with medicine in Rockford since coming here as a medical student in 1980, and then working as a family practice doctor since graduating from residency in 1986. Please note: I do work for Swedish American, but have nothing against Rockford Memorial. Whether they build on the east side of Rockford or not, there is such an overwhelming panorama of human suffering---as a family doc, I will always be too busy. My focus of concern in writing this letter is the general Rockford community.

Please note in reviewing Rockford Memorial's application, it is of utmost importance for the Board to be aware of the foundational socioeconomic difference between east and west Rockford. Unfortunately a simple read of our local newspaper or police logs makes this east/west demarcation obvious. Also note the proposed building site on Riverside Boulevard is about as far east as one can get in Rockford.

By using a bullet point format in most of this letter, I hope to keep my points concise and keep narrative to a minimum.

- The seemingly heart-felt testimonies you have heard to date about improving medical care in the community risk camouflaging the root issue. Looking demographically— is it simply an attempt to go where the money is?
- Will another hospital spread our region's ER specialty coverage too thin? Specialists in the doctor's lounge are vocalizing how difficult it is to cover 3 ER's already. Now a 4th?

- Despite all the dialogue about continuing west side commitment, I'm very doubtful Rockford Memorial will be maintaining a west side presence for long. It takes a lot of one-eye-closed-type cognitive dissonance or blind faith to not foresee the eventual incremental move which is being planned. Will one of their excuses be lack of specialty physician support?
- People testify about the supposedly improved tertiary care specialty service access, what about the access to the basic more common day-to-day primary care medical services? Won't these basic preventative services become even more difficult to access for our lower socioeconomic citizens if ultimately services are moved farther away from where they live?
- OSF-Saint Anthony's hospital has our east side adequately covered and Swedish American provides access to our midtown residents. Is concentrating more health care services to eastern Rockford really fulfilling a necessity?
- Does "lack of land for expansion" imply offices, houses and lots can no longer be bought in real estate transactions? Or is a "land-locked" argument being used as an excuse to begin an east-side progressive move?
- Another issue perhaps more important than doctors and nurses is dollars. The socioeconomic lot of a person and their ultimate healthcare status is so very intimately connected. If Rockford Memorial is truly concerned about the health of our community, why not bring more money, jobs, opportunities, and most importantly hope to west Rockford?

I am aware that some elected officials in high offices are standing in support of this move by Rockford Memorial, but I hope this letter from someone with full frontline awareness is helpful in your decision making process.

Thank you,



Daniel R. Retzer MD