



January 30, 2018

Via Federal Express

Ms. Kathryn J. Olsen
Chair
Illinois Health Facilities and
Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Re: Northgrove Dialysis (Proj. No. 17-049)

Dear Chair Olson:

I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital - Highland, a critical access hospital in Highland, Illinois. For more than 135 years, we have provided care to residents in portions of Madison, Clinton and Bond counties. As a longstanding institution in the Highland community, we understand the needs of our patients, the community and Southern Illinois and the Metro East region and are pleased to support the proposed establishment of Northgrove Dialysis in Highland.

Highland is a predominantly rural area and a designated health care professional shortage area. The closest dialysis facilities are all more than a twenty minute drive for our patients who must take rural two-lane roads to reach their dialysis care. Because patients dialyze three times per week, this results in dialysis patients or their family members driving more than two hours per week for the patient to receive life sustaining treatment. This level of access is not a long-term feasible option for our patients, many of whom are elderly, very sick, or have limited transportation options.

DaVita is a leading provider of dialysis services in the United States, and this project/proposed facility will address the lack of dialysis care with our specific patient and community needs in mind. DaVita's proposed facility will provide much needed, high-quality dialysis services to our patients *in our community*, helping to improve their health outcomes and lives.

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital – Highland enthusiastically supports the proposed establishment of Northgrove Dialysis to help secure safe and convenient dialysis options for our Highland patients. We urge the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve the application and help address this critical access issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John A. Ludwig'.

John Ludwig
President & CEO
HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital - Highland