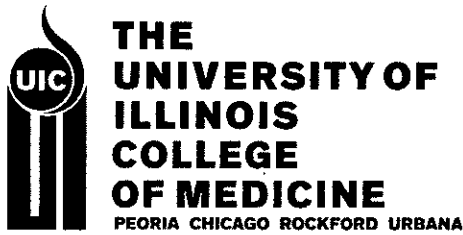


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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

**Office of the Regional Dean**  
One Illini Drive  
Box 1649  
Peoria, Illinois 61656-1649

**Sara Rusch, MD, MACP**  
Regional Dean

October 15, 2018

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 W. Jefferson St., 2nd Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of re-establishing the heart transplant program at OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center. I was a practicing internist and Chair of the Department of Medicine during the years when the previous heart transplant program was operating. Currently I am the Regional Dean for the University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria. I saw firsthand how important it was to our Central Illinois patients to have access to this service in Central Illinois. OSF HealthCare, its hospitals, and clinics are dedicated to serving the needs of our patients and have particular expertise in the areas of complex care. Over the last 5-10 years, OSF Healthcare, in conjunction with the University, has added fellowships in cardiology and pulmonary critical care, recruited additional talented specialty physicians and expanded the range of services provided to the region.

I believe reinstating the heart transplant program will further enhance our ability to care for patients. This will allow members of this community to receive the highest level of cardiovascular care right here in our own community. It will also prevent families from needing to travel long distances for a heart transplant.

As Regional Dean for the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria, I believe that re-establishing the cardiac transplant program will have a positive impact on patients with end stage heart disease in the Peoria region as well as on their families.

Sincerely,

Sara L. Rusch, M.D., MACP  
Regional Dean  
University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria

cc: Mark Hohulin, Senior Vice President Healthcare Analytics  
OSF HealthCare  
800 NE Glen Oak Avenue  
Peoria, IL 61603