

August 28, 2019

Courtney Avery  
Board Administrator  
Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
Illinois Department of Public Health  
525 West Jefferson Street, Second Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

19-021  
**RECEIVED**

AUG 28 2019

HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

**Re: Certificate of Need Application to Establish and Expand Comprehensive Physical Rehabilitation Services in HSA 11**

Dear Ms. Avery,

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of a comprehensive physical rehabilitation hospital in Southern Illinois' HSA 11. The Rehabilitation Institute of Southern Illinois, LLC has applied for a Certificate of Need to build a 40-bed freestanding inpatient rehabilitation hospital in Shiloh (St. Clair County), IL, and this hospital will be a welcome addition to the growing medical and health care community in Southern Illinois. The residents of this area would greatly benefit from this proposed hospital's services, and I encourage the Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve this application.

I am a board certified neurologist and have been practicing my specialty in the Greater St. Louis area for over 20 years. I care for hundreds of patients annually who suffer from a stroke, exacerbation of their multiple sclerosis, traumatic and non-traumatic brain injuries or other neurological conditions that require post-acute inpatient rehabilitation. I, and the medical community at large, have learned that acute inpatient rehabilitation is a necessary and critically important aspect of the patient's overall continuum of care. Patients and their families who can access the intensity of medical, nursing, physical, occupational and speech therapies provided in the comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation setting have far better functional and cognitive outcomes that improve their quality of life. I am actively involved in the care and treatment of rehabilitation patients who are treated at The Rehabilitation Institute of St. Louis and can attest to their advanced therapy modalities, expertise, and excellent outcomes. My colleagues and I advise and encourage our patients to go to this type of rehabilitation hospital to maximize their opportunity to return to their activities of daily living.

Patients who live in Southern Illinois have very limited access to inpatient rehabilitation hospital services. Because of this, some patients and families settle for a lower level of post-acute care, such as a skilled nursing facility or home health care closer to their home. Those settings are neither as intense in the provision of advanced therapeutic modalities nor as conducive to family involvement in their care. Some patients are forced to travel significant distances to receive required inpatient rehabilitation care, far from their families and community support. The patient's family and friends who are able to participate in their rehabilitation contribute to their progress and road to better outcomes at home.

Having better access to inpatient rehabilitation services in Southern Illinois' HSA 11 would greatly improve patient care in several ways. It would reduce delays to rehabilitation and shorten acute care length of stay by increasing inpatient rehabilitation bed availability. It would allow local residents to stay closer to home with increased family support. It would bring a level of specialized inpatient rehabilitation to the residents of Southern Illinois that is simply not available today. Most importantly, it would improve the outcomes for patients in need of these services, as seen by the research consistently showing that inpatient rehabilitation patients have reduced mortality, shorter lengths of stay, lower readmission rates, better functional gains, and a higher rate of discharge to home than those patients who are forced to settle for a lower level of post-acute care.

There are so many patients in need of this valuable service in Southern Illinois, and the proposed hospital will help to fill this gap in the continuum of care. For these reasons, I hope you will recognize the need for additional comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation hospital beds in Southern Illinois and approve this project that will serve the citizens of Illinois' HSA 11. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Alonso', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Alonso, MD  
Board Certified Neurology