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DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



June 12, 2019

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University Counseling Services
2250 North Sheffield Avenue
Suite 350
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3673
773/325-7779
FAX: 773/325-4535

Ms. Courtney R. Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, Second Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

**HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

Dear Ms. Avery,

As DePaul University's Psychiatrist on staff at University Counseling Services, I am writing to support Illinois Masonic Medical Center's plan to create a new center for outpatient behavioral health care on the medical campus. At DePaul, we consider Illinois Masonic an indispensable partner in promoting the health of our students and our shared Chicago community.

DePaul enrolls roughly 23,000 students each year, a varied population of undergraduate, graduate and professional students. Students' health needs are diverse, and their life circumstances vary greatly. Many have private insurance, others have Medicaid plans, and some experience lapses in coverage and may encounter severe financial hardship.

Early adulthood is a period of tremendous growth and change. It is also a time of risk for the emergence of mental illness that can have serious or even tragic outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Across the country, colleges and universities are experiencing an increase in need for mental health services, and this is true at DePaul as well.

Within the University, our Student Affairs division, which includes University Counseling Services (UCS), Health Promotion and Wellness, and Public Safety, is dedicated to protecting the health and wellbeing of our students while helping them meet their academic goals. While clinicians at UCS can help students address personal and mental health barriers so that they can persist in their academic careers and graduate, we are not and cannot be a medical or mental health treatment center. Where student needs go beyond the support we can provide on campus, we connect students with the treatment they need in the community.

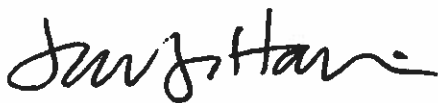
Over the past decade, we have come to rely on Masonic's behavioral health programs to meet these needs. We refer our students to Illinois Masonic for the treatment of depression, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, trauma-related distress, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other conditions

that can co-exist with these. Illinois Masonic has programs and clinical strengths that are otherwise missing in our neighborhood on the North Side of Chicago.

- Ability to meet the needs of any of our students, including adolescents under 18, adults older than typical college age, medically complex patients, and international students who benefit from seeing staff with broad cultural competence and access to translation support.
- Clinical expertise to assess and treat a wide range of conditions, including ones of unique concern to our student population. A prime example is Masonic's recently created early intervention program for young adults experiencing a first psychotic episode.
- Ability to respond to students' changing and developing conditions: as part of a medical center, patients in crisis can "step up" to more intensive, inpatient care and back to outpatient care. Proximity to the emergency department further facilitates coordination and continuity of care.
- Accessibility to students with most private insurance plans and to students covered by Medicaid. Case management to assist students facing other challenges and hardships.
- Capacity to see and assess students quickly through the First Access walk-in clinic.
- Psychiatry, individual therapy, group therapy and case management in one center.
- Integration with primary and specialty medical care.
- Proximity to DePaul's Lincoln Park Campus and to the CTA brown line.
- Direct communication between DePaul staff and Masonic's crisis team, outpatient case managers, and clinicians.
- Cultural compatibility with DePaul's mission to serve the community and respect the dignity of every person, especially those who are in greatest need.

A new facility, specifically designed for outpatient behavioral health and located near the Emergency Department, will be of tremendous benefit to the health of the DePaul community, our shared neighborhood, and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Jennifer Harris, MD