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**AUG 1 2019**

**HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

7/24/2019

Ms. Courtney Avery  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

RE: Blessing Health System

I am writing to inform you of the great partnership that Blessing Hospital and Blessing Health System (BHS) provide to the Public Health Infrastructure in Adams and surrounding counties. As Public Health Administrator of Adams County Health Department and Brown County Health Department, I value the population health focus and willingness to partner that BHS has always shown to our community. At this time, when BHS seeks to improve access to patient care and a more streamlined patient flow, I feel it is important that you hear from my Department.

In Adams County, the Public Health Department has, for decades, operated a Dental Clinic to serve the uninsured and public-insured population of Western Illinois. At times, it has been a challenge to keep the clinic viable. Blessing has been a strong partner, committing a significant annual financial contribution to the clinic, assisting with continuity of care in the patients of both organizations, and even aiding in recruitment of Dentists at times. Without this partnership, I am not sure that the clinic would have remained viable and accessible to our most at-risk populations in the county.

In 2015, Blessing was a key partner in bringing mobile health services into our community by supporting a mobile dental, medical and behavioral health services clinic. This effort focused on school-based healthcare and has provided an opportunity for our rural children to have greater access to services in their own communities. Blessing provided not only financial contribution to the project, but also technical support during the planning phase and continued support by providing its doctors and nurse practitioners to staff the mobile clinic during events.

Along with the direct contributions discussed above, I also wish to express the level at which BHS contributes to population-health based plans in our community. They are a partner at the table every time the Public Health Department updates community health assessments and community health plan implementation efforts. In fact, the alignment of the public health system goals and objectives would be much less meaningful without the willingness of the Health System to be a full partner.

Finally, as the administrator of a second health department in a county without its own hospital, I have been able to leverage our relationship with Blessing to assure that the great contributions they make in Adams County provide similar impact to the residents of Brown



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County. For example, the mobile clinic, with BHS providers, makes routine trips to the Brown County School District, where we are able to provide services to children who would otherwise have to travel nearly an hour, missing a full day of school while their parent misses a full day of work. Further, Blessing contributes to the I-PLAN effort in Brown County, assuring that it is a resource and a partner in the public health infrastructure there.

I hope that the information above is helpful to you as Blessing Health System seeks to provide improved services and continuity to the residents of Western Illinois.

Sincerely,

Jerrod C. Welch, MPA, CPHA  
Public Health Administrator

CC: Blessing Health System