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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

July 26, 2019

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Service Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery,

It is a privilege to write this letter in support of Blessing Health System. Our community has improved health because of the partnership with our organization, Horizons Social Services.

Horizons is a private non-profit organization which receives financial support through generous partners like Blessing Health System. Horizons operates the only daily feeding program in Adams County. In 2018, we served over 35,000 hot, nutritious meals to over 3,000 of the poorest people living in our community. We also operate a free-choice food pantry that served over 12,000 individuals last year.

The lack of access to nutritious and affordable food affects the physical and mental health of underserved children and adults living in our community. Research shows adults living in food-insecure households have more emergency room visits and hospital admissions. Our partnership with Blessing Health System is working to address this very issue. We have a shared mission to improve the health of our community. We provide food relief in a facility where our clients feel safe and supported. Our clients trust us, and we know Blessing Health System is a trusted partner. We trust them to help us bring health to our Horizons clients. This relationship has developed over the year as our partnership has grown and expanded.

In addition to receiving generous financial support from Blessing Health System, we work closely with nurses from Blessing, and students from the Blessing Rieman College of Nursing. The nurses and students volunteer in our soup kitchen and food pantry, organize food drives, and take client's blood pressure. Additionally, they have conversations with clients on various health related topics such as managing medications, living with diabetes, diet and exercise, the importance of cancer screenings, and many other topics. The time and energy dedicated by these nurses and students is encouraged and supported by the Blessing Health System administration and management.

Horizons, in partnership with Blessing Health System, and the Adams County Health Department, vaccinated over 130 adults for Hepatitis A. Horizons in partnership with Blessing Hospital Patient Services is preparing to pack 50 Take Home Maternity Kits for nutrition and care of newborns. Horizons' Food Pantry Manager saw a need for the maternity kits, contacted a Blessing Health System employee who was quick to respond to the need, and we are close to our first distribution. These examples demonstrate how Blessing Health System administrators and employees are connecting with and committed to the well-being of our community.

Hungry children perform better in school when they aren't thinking about their growling stomachs, and parents can focus on their family and jobs when they aren't worried about food for their family. People view their community in a more positive light when they are provided with food relief, as evidenced by our own Horizons internal surveys. The entire community benefits from our collaboration.

In closing, I am proud to be part of a community collaboration where Blessing Health System is leading the way to help get people healthy... and keep people healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Stephens".

Sarah Stephens

Executive Director

Horizons Social Services