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November 8, 2019

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Ms. Courtney Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62702

Re: Project #19-043
Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center

Dear Ms. Avery:

As the chairperson of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital's board of directors, I have had the opportunity to be intimately involved in the growth of this hospital over the past seven years. During my tenure, the hospital has received numerous quality and safety awards, including the Guardian of Excellence and Pinnacle of Excellence Awards in Patient Experience from Press-Ganey, a five-star rating for patient experience from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals from The Chartis Center for Rural Health.

As I read the proposal to add orthopedic surgery services to the existing Ambulatory Surgery Treatment Center (ASTC) in Fairview Heights, I agreed that access to ambulatory surgical care is essential to the well-being of a community, especially those who are elderly. St. Joseph's Hospital's existing outpatient surgical center provides access to high quality care to the residents of Clinton County eliminating the need for them to drive miles from home to receive care. Knowing that our surgical services department often has open slots for outpatient surgical patients, one of my concerns is that the addition of beds in the ASTC will negatively impact the services we offer locally to patients. Many of our orthopedic patients are elderly with underlying medical issues which make driving distances a burden to family or a hazard to the patient. I feel it would be a dis-service to those in our community to add capacity in a distant facility that would take away local access to care.

It is my opinion that the addition of orthopedic surgical rooms in the Fairview Heights area would negatively impact local access to safe, high quality care for patients. For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you deny the proposed addition of orthopedic surgical services at the Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George B. Kruse".

George Kruse, chairperson
HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Breese
Board of Directors