



12866 Troxler Avenue  
Highland, IL 62249  
(618) 651-2600  
[www.stjosephshighland.org](http://www.stjosephshighland.org)

*An Affiliate of Hospital Sisters Health System*

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**NOV 20 2019**

**HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

November 18, 2019

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

Re: Project #19-043  
Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center

Dear Ms. Avery:

Two years ago, I became the Director of Surgical Services for HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland. Since that time, my focus has centered on expanding the procedures offered in the surgical services department at our community hospital. We have several skilled surgeons and highly trained staff who have worked over the years to ensure that we provide the safest, quality care for our patients.

The proposal submitted by Dr. Shakeel Ahmed to add orthopedic surgery services to the Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center located in Fairview Heights could negatively impact our focus on growth for this department, especially as we try to attract new providers to the community. Currently, we have two dedicated orthopedic surgeons who routinely schedule patients for surgeries at our hospital; however, we continue to experience lower than expected utilization on a weekly basis. The proposal from Dr. Ahmed not only has the potential to negatively impact capacity at our hospital but will also affect recruitment efforts of new providers. As part of our growth initiatives, we have ongoing recruitment efforts to bring additional orthopedic surgeons to the area. A priority for new orthopedic surgeons is being able to perform a variety of surgeries on a routine basis to maintain their skill level. Adding orthopedic surgical services at the MESC would only serve to erode the volume of potential surgical procedures that would be performed at our hospital. This in turn leads potential surgeons to seek other facilities that have a larger patient pool where they can maintain their skills.



**HSHS**  
**St. Joseph's**  
**Hospital Highland**

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I urge you to deny the proposed addition of orthopedic surgical rooms to the Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center because it will stagnate the growth of services offered at our community hospital and affect our ability to recruit new physicians to our rural community.

Sincerely,

Megan Espenschied, MSN, RN  
Director of Surgical Services  
HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, Highland