

Metro East Endoscopic Surgery Center

5023 North Illinois Street

Fairview Heights IL 62208

618-239-0678

RECEIVED

JAN 22 2020

**HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

January 20, 2020

Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
515 W. Jefferson St., 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Re: Project 19-043, Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center

Dear Ms. Avery:

This letter of support is for the proposed low-cost expansion of services at the existing Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center. The CON permit proposed will allow those elective Medicare approved Orthopedic Surgery, Podiatry, Pain Management and Ophthalmology procedures to be performed at the surgery center. Over time the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services has expanded the list of surgeries that are safe and effective when performed in an ambulatory surgery center and adding these surgical specialties will address the need for lower cost services that will help our governments, private payors, patients and their families manage the high cost of health care.

My provider organizations have had a long and fruitful association with the State as a leading area Medicaid provider. Our surgery center was the first new surgery center in decades to serve the needs of the patients of the Illinois suburbs of St. Louis, known as the Metro East region. This was during a period when the two large hospital systems were moving their services away from the immediate area.

We are forever grateful to this Board which allowed us to open our doors to provide services to the local population. I take pride in stating that we have been able to fulfill our promise of caring for the indigent. MESC has a track record of seeing more Medicaid patients than any other outpatient facility in the area. We take pride in the fact that 25% of patients who receive care from MESC are Medicaid recipients. This is a patient population that is not accepted at any other local center, a patient population that if it wasn't for MESC would be making a journey across the river to Missouri for their outpatient surgery center surgical needs. Thank you for your confidence in us.

I would also like to express my disappointment in HSHS's aggressive posture toward this small center. I don't understand why in the world a \$2.5 billion dollar health system (nearly 1,000 times the revenue of MESO) is on the attack trying to block a low cost project like this one. Such a small change would not be reviewable if one of the HSHS hospitals was adding surgical specialties in its operating rooms. HSHS should not be allowed to use the CON process to block healthy competition. Its complaints should not be given credence.

Our elected officials, area organizations, patients and local physicians are really pleased about the plan to expand our offerings, and I sincerely hope the CON process will not be a barrier.

I hope this process will recognize that surgical providers need a level playing field and that the Board will approve the request. Thanking you in anticipation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shakeel Ahmed', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shakeel Ahmed, MD