



**United Way
of Whiteside County**

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November 7, 2019

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson St. 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Members of the Board,

I am writing in support of CGH Medical Center's Certificate of Need Application to open a bed behavioral health unit.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Whiteside County United Way (UWWC), it is my responsibility to affirm and uphold our belief in the dignity of all people. We are committed to uniting our community and providing resources to improve lives and strengthen our community.

As a member of the Whiteside County Healthier Communities Partnership, our agency and others have created synergy and a culture of advocacy surrounding mental illness. Intensive outpatient and post recovery services are serving our community well. However, one crucial gap remains, and it has an obvious barrier to achieving our mission.

Whiteside County lacks timely, effective, and local inpatient behavioral health services. Due to the lack of inpatient beds in our region, 30% of our residents with inpatient needs do not receive that care within 24 hours of presentation to CGH Medical Center and 57% of our residents are transferred over 50 miles away. Between 2017-2019, 215 patients were admitted to CGH Medical Center, medically stabilized and then discharged to outpatient therapy. These patients never had access to an inpatient behavioral health unit because there were no beds available for transfer. This disparity creates a vicious cycle where sustained recovery is threatened.

CGH Medical Center is taking a stand for the betterment of our community. They understand their role in addressing this crisis. Please approve the application to open a behavioral health unit at CGH Medical Center.

Sincerely,

Diana Verhulst
Chief Executive Officer
United Way of Whiteside County

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SERVICES REVIEW BOARD