

January 19, 2020

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
c/o Courtney Avery, Administrator  
525 W Jefferson St, 2nd Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

**RECEIVED**

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HEALTH FACILITIES  
SERVICES REVIEW

Re: Support for OSF Healthcare Comprehensive Cancer Center and Proton Therapy in Peoria, IL

I was excited to hear about the plans by OSF Healthcare to establish a comprehensive cancer center in Peoria. Ironically, I was at Barnes Jewish Hospital/Siteman Cancer Center in St. Louis, undergoing Proton Beam Therapy when I heard the news.

I am a life-long Peoria resident who was originally diagnosed with cancer in 2007, with recurrences in 2016 and 2018. In October of 2019, after running out of treatment options available here in Peoria it was suggested I try Proton Radiation Therapy. My options were to travel to either St. Louis or Chicago for a 5 to 6-week program.

While I was thrilled to have an option, it was a decision that required much thoughtful consideration. Not just about the therapy itself, but the logistics of it all. Anxiety set in, first thinking about being away from my family and support group for 5 to 6 weeks during two major holidays (Thanksgiving and Christmas), but even more so navigating a major city that I was unfamiliar with, driving through rush hours on unfamiliar roads, not having people around to help if treatment got rough, and of course financial worries about costs of food, housing, and transportation. My experience there was incredible - mainly because I had the resources to make it that way. Through my years of treatment, I have met so many people who would not have had the resources to travel for treatment. It would be a beacon of hope for so many in the Peoria area, as well as outlying areas across our state and into bordering states. I think many people would choose an option of a program in a city the size of Peoria, over a program in a major market. Peoria is easy to travel to, and easy to navigate once you are here. The cost of living here is far more affordable than going to a major city, while still offering many amenities to make your stay enjoyable. And most importantly, Peoria is known for having the highest quality staff of physicians, nurses, techs and medical personnel with proven records. All of this can bring peace of mind to people who are facing terrifying decisions.

I urge you to approve this project to bring hope and options to so many people. The Peoria Community embraces OSF Healthcare and the support it provides to cancer patients, survivors and our families. Access to exceptional care is vital in contributing to the well being of people fighting for their lives. Please approve this request.

Sincerely,



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