

December 4, 2019

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**

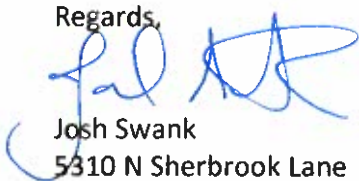
Re: Letter of Support for Comprehensive Cancer Center and Proton Therapy

As a survivor of Squamous Cell Carcinoma within the tongue (tongue cancer), I am writing this letter to express my extremely strong support of the plans by OSF HealthCare to establish a comprehensive cancer center and offer proton beam therapy in Peoria.

- Two years ago today, I was diagnosed with tongue cancer at the rear, base of my tongue, after three years of intense, undiagnosable pain. Subsequent biopsies and imaging showed that the cancer was approximately 50%+ throughout my tongue and had spread to my lymph nodes. As an otherwise healthy 42-year-old, I expected to have a long life ahead of me. Upon meeting with my doctors and oncologists, I learned about the prognosis and treatment options:
 - Traditional Method / Available in Central Illinois: Photon-Radiation + Chemotherapy; these treatment methods, when successful in beating the cancer, often resulted in significant side effects including disfiguration, the inability to speak post-treatment and no longer being able to eat solid foods.
 - Modern Technology / Required Temporary Relocation: Proton Beam Therapy + Chemotherapy; this option would require leaving Peoria for 2+ months for treatment – to Chicagoland, St. Louis or Rochester, MN. This form of treatment would significantly reduce side effects.
- After careful consideration, prayer and numerous discussions and consultations with trusted advisors in the medical community, I chose to receive my treatments at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. This resulted in significant out-of-pocket expenses and stress to my family to “move” to Rochester for ten weeks and also required me to have round-the-clock care by family or friends. The treatments were successful and I am now cancer free with no significant side effects. I can work and am a productive member of our community through volunteering and philanthropy. I have no disfiguration, can speak clearly and have no difficulties eating. Simply put, my quality of life is as it should be and everyone else within our community should have the same opportunity to receive modern treatment options that provide the best outcome available. Had I received the traditional photon-radiation treatment, I fear my outcome would not have been as positive.

I appreciate the commitment by OSF HealthCare to support patients with cancer, survivors, and their families. I urge you to approve this project that will ensure members of my community will have access to the care they need.

Regards,



Josh Swank
5310 N Sherbrook Lane
Peoria, IL 61614