

Memo: Public Hearing on E-024-19 to discontinue MetroSouth Medical Center, Blue Island

Speaker: Dr. Tina Decker, DNP, RN, CNS

Position: In Opposition to closure of MetroSouth

I, Dr. Tina Decker, Chair of the Department of Nursing at Trinity Christian College and Vice-Chair of the Illinois Association of Colleges of Nursing and speaking in opposition to the closure of MetroSouth Medical Center.

Currently there is a lot of effort in the state of Illinois to increase the number of nurses. Part of this is focused specifically at increasing the number of nursing students within the state. Specific examples are the Illinois Board of Higher Education offering grants specifically to “increase the number of registered nurses with high quality postsecondary credential to meet the demands of the Illinois economy.” However, I can tell you that what nursing education needs more than money, is CLINICAL SITES. That is, more high-quality facilities where nursing students can get hands on experiences caring for patients in acute care settings. And MetroSouth offers just that. For as long as I can remember, MetroSouth and before that St. Francis has been partnering with Trinity Christian College’s Bachelors of Science Nursing (BSN) program to offer high quality clinical placements that prepare the next generation of BSN nurses. If MetroSouth closes its doors, it would not be a situation where one door closes and another opens, it would be just another closed door that further limits the number of qualified students we can educate to be nurses in Illinois.

Another current issue of great effort in Illinois is to decrease maternal and infant mortality rates. This year there were numerous bills introduced in Illinois legislation responding to this issue. Just as recently as July 12, a new act was passed that creates a Taskforce on Infant and Maternal Mortality among African Americans. That act can be cited as saying “Black infants in America are more than twice as likely to die as white infants” and “Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes.” And when I hear these statistics, I instantly see faces, of the people I served as a nurse at MetroSouth Medical Center. I see the mother who came in actively hemorrhaging, who received an emergency cesarean section, and who survived along with her baby. Then I think about what it would mean to her to travel 10 more miles, or 12 more minutes, and if you ask me if she would’ve survived, the best I could say is “Just maybe”. And today we have heard story after story of “Just maybe”. The gunshot victim, the asthmatic child, the patient having a stroke, the patient having a heart attack all these stories we’ve already heard today. REAL people who are alive because of the care they received here? What is the value of their lives? 2 million in revenue loss the past few years? 8 million last year? 10 million next year? What is the value of all the lives that will be lost because of the decrease in access to quality healthcare.

Closure of MetroSouth would be in direct opposition to so much the people in this state are currently working towards with increasing the supply of nurses and decreasing maternal and infant mortality being just two examples. As such, I strongly speak in OPPOSITION to the closure of MetroSouth.

Respectfully,

Tina M. Decker

DNP, RN, CNSM