

August 24, 2020

Courtney Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities & Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761
courtney.avery@illinois.gov

RECEIVED

AUG 27 2020

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Re: Opposition to CON Application #20-17 – Metro East Endoscopic Surgery Center

Dear Ms. Avery:

I respectfully ask that the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board deny this CON application. As described therein, Project #20-17 relies *entirely* on shifting outpatient orthopedic surgeries away from two rural hospitals that are already underutilized and financially struggling due to the ongoing pandemic. Clearly this is an unnecessary duplication of services at the most inopportune time.

Rural healthcare has always been a delicate balance, grounded in our relatively few hospitals and dependent upon a significant degree of collaboration. Unnecessarily shifting relatively higher-margin outpatient procedures out of rural hospitals, particularly when (as here) their utilization rates are already below state standards, will have unavoidable negative consequences. That is particularly true when (as here) a Critical Access Hospital is involved.

As Chairman of the Board of HSHS St. Joseph Hospital – Breese (SJB), I personally know the critical healthcare and community needs served by our 46-bed hospital. We not only provide quality localized healthcare, but also the peace of mind of a nearby emergency department when minutes matter. Especially now, please help preserve SJB's ability to effectively serve our community by denying this CON application.

Respectfully,



George Kruse
Board Chair, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital - Breese
9515 Holy Cross Ln.
Breese, IL 62230

Cc: Mike Constantino
Project Reviewer
Illinois Health Facilities & Review Board