



August 28, 2020

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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Courtney Avery  
Administrator  
Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board  
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 6761  
[Courtney.Avery@illinois.gov](mailto:Courtney.Avery@illinois.gov)

**RE: Opposition to CON Application #20-017 – Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center**

Dear Mrs. Avery:

As a registered nurse and now a hospital administrator, I have always prided myself in providing the best care to our patients and that includes receiving that care close to home at a reasonable cost. That being said, allowing the Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center (MESC) to perform orthopedic procedures goes against that philosophy, so I ask you to oppose Certificate of Need application #20-017.

If the CON is permitted, St. Joseph's Hospital Highland will be adversely affected by the decrease in utilization; negatively impacting revenue and the ability to provide charity care. For context: St. Joseph's Hospital Highland's Charity Care from outpatient service totals \$640,937, while MESC reports zero dollars Charity Care on \$2.3 million in net patient revenue.

With the duplication in services the cost to the patient will escalate. For example: the MESC plans to charge \$39,897 for an arthroscopy of the shoulder with surgical repair of slap lesion; St. Joseph's Hospital Highland charges \$17,535 for the same procedure.

In my desire to provide our patients the best care possible, I agreed to purchase the latest equipment, as requested by Dr. Ungacta of Midwest Bone & Joint Surgery, for orthopedic procedures at St. Joseph's Hospital Highland. That equipment included the Mako Robot for close to \$1 million; \$290,000 for the total joint replacement software; and a \$120,000 annual preventative maintenance program to keep the machine in tip top shape. These are significant investments for a hospital the size of St. Joseph's Hospital Highland. It is very disappointing that Dr. Ungacta now wants to redirect his surgical cases to the competing facility when he is the only surgeon able to utilize the equipment we have purchased at St. Joseph's Hospital Highland.



**HSHS**  
**St. Joseph's**  
**Hospital Highland**

In closing, I am asking that you consider where patients of Highland, IL should receive their care. It should be in their hometown facility. So, please deny the Certificate of Need application #20-017. It is the right thing to do for our patients.

Sincerely,

John A. Ludwig  
President and Chief Executive Officer