

August 24, 2020

Courtney Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities & Review Board
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**HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

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

Dear Ms. Avery:

I am writing to ask that the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board (IHFSRB) deny CON Application #20-17. If Project #20-17 continues there will be a shift of outpatient orthopedic surgeries away from my rural hospital, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital - Breese. It is important for the IHFSRB to realize that advancement of this project will most likely result in further job loss for healthcare professionals, adding additional insult to an already injured economy. I believe this surgery center is a duplication of services and is not needed in our area.

St. Joseph's Hospital - Breese currently has four orthopedic surgeons within our on-site specialty clinic, with a fifth surgeon joining our hospital in December of 2020. We are currently operating at a utilization rate of 35% which give us plenty of bandwidth to meet demand. I believe building this surgical suit will be a disservice to the community because it takes surgical cases away from hospitals backed by Joint Commission standards of quality and into a non-hospital surgical suit. We currently employ one of the physicians, Dr. Felix Ungacta who supports the CON application even in leu of his declining surgical volumes in the community of Breese and surrounding counties. This is clearly an attempt to pull patients away from the hospital to this surgical suit and not on the actual needs of the community.

In summary, this CON expansion of orthopedic surgery services is another demonstration of severe misuse of resources. The approval of this CON will duplicate resources and pull services from the hospital who have a long reputation of top quality and safety scores and multiple awards from the state of Illinois and CMS. We must focus on the quality and safe care of our community and not the duplication of services for financial gain.

As a community and healthcare leader, I ask that the IHFSRB look at CON Application #20-17 be seen for what it is. A desire to pull surgical volume from the hospital into an offsite clinic which would cause gaps in the existing hospitals surgical schedules and pull this volume to a surgical suit that does not warrant demand. I appreciate your time and attention to this letter, thank you.

Respectfully,



Zachary Yoder MHA, RN
Chief Nursing Officer

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