

# Kelly Sager

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**RECEIVED**

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**Re: Opposition to CON Project 20-030 – Effingham Medical Office Building**

St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital is more than a "sole" community hospital.... it HAS been "the sole" community hospital, it was the hospital that this community memorialized! The Hospital Health Sisters came to this community in the late 1800's and began to provide what the community needed, unconditional care for the residents of Effingham County. As the years came and went the Sisters watched the census go from around 2300 in those early years to current day at over 12,000 residents. They have supported these residents through many tough times, the Great Depression, the Spanish Flu and that dreadful night in 1949 when the hospital burned to the ground. Our community rose up to rebuild it! It forever became St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. These Sisters and many citizens were courageous during these times but never wavered in their support for the community they served, the Effingham Community! I have had the privilege of serving this community for the last 20 plus years and have had the opportunity to be with many of the patients St. Anthony's has served. I know firsthand the people that have held the hands of community members when they have welcomed a newborn and take their first breath and others while taking their last breath. It has been THIS hospital that has employed our friends and neighbors, supported local athletes, our children and schools. Why would

**we want to jeopardize this? Small rural hospitals are often called the lynchpins of local communities, they contribute to the local economy.**

**St. Anthony's is a vitally important partner to the Effingham community, being the largest employer in Effingham County and collaborating with the community to bring a wide array of critical services – including the Workman's Sports Complex (the hospital leases space to provide therapy services, and thus financially supports the continued presence of this vital community resource); Harmony Playground; Crisis Nursery; partnership with Catholic Charities (providing medication assistance, a food pantry, and a diabetes program); and support to local schools (vision and hearing screening, which the hospital now provides free of charge after the local health department lost its funding, 3rd grade health/safety classes and CPR classes for students).**

**The redundancy of service and redirection of patients will harm St. Anthony's and the greater Effingham area. Based on volumes in the CON application, this will result in a reduction of 8% in St. Anthony's gross revenue. In addition, the huge new size could also eventually accommodate a new surgery center or micro-hospital, a possibility suggested by the lack of specific use for many of the new procedure rooms. *While a similarly sized replacement building, without the duplication of services, is entirely acceptable, this massive expansion in size and new services must be opposed if St. Anthony's is to remain a full-service, sole community hospital.***

***The Hospital that our children have been born at, our loved ones have had surgery at and the emergency room where we will go for that inevitable moment of need. Is this project as presented what Effingham County needs?***

***I urge the review board to consider the economic impact and deny CON application as submitted.***

***Respectfully  
Kelly Sager***