



Mercy Hospital & Medical Center Discontinuation
Project No. 20-039
Public Hearing: 10/28/2020

Nancy Honeycutt, Chief Nursing Officer, Mercy Hospital & Medical Center

My name is Nancy Honeycutt and I am the Chief Nursing Officer at Mercy Hospital & Medical Center. I am here today to share my support of Mercy's plan to discontinue services at its hospital.

Me and my team of hundreds of nurses and clinical caregivers are reminded every day of the flaws that exist within our current system of health and the ways this system is not meeting the unique needs of South Side patients.

Chicago has the largest life expectancy gap in the country – just over 30 years for residents on the South Side compared to residents on the North Side. Health inequities continue to persist with higher incidences of chronic disease and other disparities that are aggravated by social determinants of health, including food insecurity, housing and trauma.

As disparities in outcomes in health remain stubbornly high, it is not access to more hospital beds that is most needed. In fact, nearly half the hospital beds in our planning area remain empty, making it nearly impossible for each of the safety net hospitals to survive. This issue, and a desire to better meet the needs of South Side patients, was at the heart of our proposed South Side

Transformation that legislators unfortunately failed to approve.

Closing a hospital is never easy. But it is, in this case, a necessary step in the transformation of health patients on the South Side need.

Mercy has a long history in our community, and I have been proud to play a role in that history. I am also pleased to see the ongoing commitment to community health by Trinity and Mercy and their plan to open a Mercy Care Center to meet the community's needs for urgent care, diagnostics and care coordination. Getting patients to the right specialists for care before illnesses require hospitalization is a step toward reducing health disparities.

I urge the board to support Mercy's plans and to take the bold steps needed to transform the system of health on Chicago's South Side.