

From: [Simone Davis](#)
To: [DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings](#)
Subject: [SUSPICIOUS MESSAGE] [External] The closing of Mercy Hospital
Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 11:39:26 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

The American Nurses Association believes that advocacy is a pillar of nursing. I am writing this letter not only as a concerned citizen but as an advocate for our patients.

I have been a registered nurse for more than 25 years. I do not speak as a representative of Mercy Hospital or the Trinity Health Care Corporation. I speak for the patients, and they have asked me what can be done about the hospital closing. Sadly, I have no answer for them.

What I do know is that our patients do not want another outpatient facility. In the certificate of need application, Trinity Health stated that based on their community needs assessment, the area would benefit from an outpatient center that would serve around 50,000 people annually. The center would offer CT, MRI, X-ray, Ultrasound, Mammography, Echo, Urgent care, and specialty care coordination. All of these services are already accessible to the community. Advocate's Outpatient Center is a three-minute walk from Mercy Hospital.

Rush has a new center 22 blocks away, and according to a recent Sun-Times article Northwestern Hospital plans to build another outpatient facility on 31st street. A glaring issue in Trinity's plan is that it doesn't include an Emergency Room.

Mercy Hospital is a level two trauma center, the only one within a 5.5-mile radius. In the past, Mercy has served over 52,000 people in the ER alone. With crime rates and gun violence on the rise in the city of Chicago, the loss of another emergency room on the Southside is nothing short of criminal. On top of this, we are closing during a pandemic.

The assessment tool used to gather the information contained in the needs assessment is conducted by the Alliance for Health Equity of Illinois. This organization consists of 37 hospitals, including Mercy, that pay for their services. According to the website, Mercy Hospital's assessment consisted of 5,934 participants answering a 16-question survey. The assessment report states that Mercy serves 80% of patients in 20 zip codes. The 60605 zip code alone has 32,000 people listed in the 2010 census report - which means 80% of roughly 600,000 people were represented by five thousand people. These numbers don't seem to give any strength to the assessment.

There are too many patients who continue to remain unrepresented. According to Chicago's Citywide Literacy Coalition, an estimated 882,000 or 30% of adults in Chicago have low-to-basic literacy skills. Over half of my patients fit into this category. It is preposterous to believe that they could have been included in the participants surveyed for the assessment.

Access to services not provided by an outpatient center will be another huge obstacle for patients. The majority of them use public transportation and will not be able to travel to the other hospitals easily, especially during Chicago's frigid winters and the intense heat that comes during summer months - not to mention during the ongoing pandemic. These obstacles will lead to a delay in care. Patients will not reach out for help until their sickness overtakes them. A majority of patients we serve will end up at the already overburdened Cook County Health system. The long wait times will be a deterrent for patients and they will go untreated. We need a full functioning hospital in this neighborhood.

I am not unrealistic. There is a lot of work to be done here, but I believe we can do this with a viable plan, proper management, and financing.

There are true heroes here at Mercy Hospital. The sign hangs on the door to remind everyone outside that “We Love Our Heros”. I know it firsthand. On November 19th, 2018, when a gunman opened fire and killed three people at the hospital before turning the gun on himself, these same heroes were there to save lives. Only we who were there know the stories of heroic acts carried out by not only doctors and nurses, but by all employees at Mercy.

To reward us with the shuttering of our beloved hospital would be heartbreaking not only for staff but the wider community the hospital serves. We care about patients here. Allow us to continue on with our 185-year-old legacy of caring for the poor and underserved. Please find a way to make us viable again.

Thank you for your attention,

A Mercy Nurse Advocate