

Illinois House of Representatives

District Office:

2108 W 35th St.

Chicago, IL 60609

Office: (872) 281-5775



Springfield Office:

270-S Stratton Office Building

Springfield, IL 62706

Phone: (217) 782-2855

Email: rep.theresamah@gmail.com

Theresa Mah

State Representative • 2nd District

Representante Estatal - 伊州眾議員

Testimony on the Proposed Closure of Mercy Hospital

Good Morning, I'm State Representative Theresa Mah. I represent the 2nd House District in the IL General Assembly. My district is just a few blocks west of Mercy Hospital but the Hospital might as well be in my district. So many of my constituents in Chinatown, Armour Square, Bridgeport, and East Pilsen rely on this hospital as the closest full-service hospital providing for their health care needs.

As a state legislator representing a large number of constituents within Mercy Hospital's service area and as a resident who myself relies on Mercy Hospital and its physicians group as the provider of my own healthcare, I am strongly opposed to the closure announced recently.

If Mercy Hospital were to close its doors, my constituents in the communities in Chinatown, Armour Square, Pilsen and Bridgeport would be left without a full-service hospital, and community members who are employed by the hospital system would be left without jobs during an economic recession and an ongoing pandemic.

Residents in the eastern part of my district, especially Chinese immigrant families and seniors in Chinatown, are already challenged by various barriers to adequate healthcare such as transportation and language access. The proposed closure would increase these barriers significantly as residents would need to travel farther and interact with hospital systems in other communities not prepared to serve the specific needs of this population.

The nearest full-service hospitals are on average more than five miles away. 5 miles may not seem very far to the average person, but for the population I represent—Chinese immigrants, many of whom are Limited English Proficient,

senior citizens, transportation-challenged and from low-income families that rely on the services of this community, safety-net hospital—5 miles may as well be on a different planet. 5 miles is a matter of life or death, a matter of having access to healthcare or none at all.

These factors that I just mentioned, immigrant status, English proficiency, distance and access to transportation, income level—these are factors that contribute to the social determinants of health that already make access to healthcare difficult and contribute to the gaping racial health disparities that already exist in our communities. These racial disparities in health care—that cut down the average lifespan of our community members based on race, class and immigration status should be what we are all working on to break down, not increase!

It is the height of irresponsibility; it is heartless and deeply detrimental to our communities to propose this closure in the middle of a pandemic, especially one that has already exposed the deep inequities that exist in our society. Closing this hospital will only deepen those inequities, multiplying the health disparities, because this closure absolutely disproportionately affects black, brown, poor, elderly, and immigrant communities.

The availability of healthcare should not be based on profit calculations. Healthcare is a human right and our communities' welfare deserves to be considered in these decisions that fundamentally affect their health.

I want to make sure it is absolutely clear and on the record that access to healthcare is of utmost importance to me. It has always been a top priority for the residents of my district. I believe it is unconscionable for a wealthy and profitable parent company to close a hospital in a minority, low-income area during a pandemic when other hospitals in wealthier areas under their ownership are expanding and receiving investments for upgrades.

It is my hope that the IL Health Facilities and Services Review Board will deny the current application to close Mercy Hospital. Thank you for your consideration.

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE!

MY NAME IS ETTA (E-T-T-A) DAVIS (D-A-V-I-S).

- = I AM A RESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE DEARBORN HOMES LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL AND A MEMBER OF THE KUBENIA BURNS HOPE CENTER.
- I AM HERE TODAY BECAUSE I AM ALSO A PATIENT OF MERCY HOSPITAL AND HAVE BEEN FOR 10 YEARS OR MORE
- I AM HERE TODAY BECAUSE I ^{HAVE} ALSO WORKED IN NURSING FOR 13 YEARS AND I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT MEDICINE WAS ABOUT SAVING LIVES MORE THAN PROFITS! SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM WHEN PEOPLE WHO DON'T CARE ABOUT HUMAN LIVES ARE ABLE TO BUY INTO HOSPITALS FOR PROFITS!
- YOU SEE, IT WAS AT MERCY HOSPITAL THAT THE DOCTORS AND MEDICAL STAFF DISCOVERED THAT I WAS A DIABETIC, YES, WALKING AROUND WITH BLOOD SUGARS OF 450 OR MORE, THEY ALSO HELPED TO GET MY BLOOD PRESSURE REGULATED, I COULD HAVE PASSED OUT AT ANY GIVEN TIME! THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT MERCY HOSPITAL HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE!
- I SAW THEM BRING MY SISTER FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH, NOT ONCE BUT TWICE! I KNOW THAT MY SISTER WOULD HAVE DIED IF THEY HAD TAKEN THAT EXTRA TIME TO TRANSPORT HER ACROSS TOWN TO ANOTHER HOSPITAL. THIS IS HOW MERCY HOSPITAL HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE!
- WE HAVE OVER 216 SENIORS, NOT TO MENTION OUR DISABLED RESIDENTS, RESIDING IN THE DEARBORN HOMES. MANY OF THEM HAVE TOLD ME ABOUT AND I HAVE BEEN PRIDE TO SEEING MERCY REUNITING AND IMPROVING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE

ALL OF THESE THINGS AND MORE ARE REASONS
WHY MERCY HOSPITAL HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE!

- WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS (MERCY) HOSPITAL
LEAVING, I THINK TO MYSELF, HERE WE GO AGAIN AS WE
DID WHEN THEY TORE DOWN MICHAEL BEECH HOSPITAL, SUPPOSEDLY
AROUND TO GET MEDICAL RECORDS AND PERHAPS THE LOSS OF
LIVES DUE TO TIME WASTED ^{TIME} IN SOMEONE, INCLUDING MYSELF,
SHOULD EXPERIENCE CARDIAC, RESPIRATORY OR ANY KIND OF
TRAUMA WHERE TIME IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE.
- THERE ARE SOME IN MY COMMUNITY WHO DON'T EVEN HAVE
CARRIAGE TO GET TO OTHER CLINICS BUT THEY CAN AT LEAST
WALK OR WHEEL THEMSELVES TO MERCY HOSPITAL. SO THESE
ARE WAYS THAT LOSING MERCY HOSPITAL WOULD AFFECT ME
AND OTHERS.
- THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WHO ARE DYING FROM COVID ARE
BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE AND YET YOU WANT TO CLOSE THIS
HOSPITAL AND ESPECIALLY DURING A PANDEMIC!!
- WE NEED GOV. PRITZKER, MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT AND THE
TRINITY ORGANIZATION, ALONG WITH THE STATE BOARD AND
ANYONE ELSE THAT IT TAKES TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION
TO SAVE THIS HOSPITAL AND WE NEED IT NOW!
- I LISTEN TO GOV. PRITZKER AND MAYOR LIGHTFOOT TALKING
ABOUT THE STATS ON COVID AND THAT'S GOOD THAT WE'RE
BEING INFORMED. NOW WE NEED TO HEAR FROM THEM ON
WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO SAVE MERCY AND OTHER HOSPITALS
FACING CLOSURES IN BLACK COMMUNITIES. WE ALSO NEED TO
HEAR FROM YOU ^{PRESIDENT} TONI PECKWINKLE. I CAN'T HEAR YOU! →
SAVE MERCY HOSPITAL