



Pittsburgh Mercy
1200 Reedsdale St
Pittsburgh, PA 15233-2109

October 26, 2020

Ms. Courtney Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery,

I am writing in support of the CON application to discontinue services at Mercy Hospital & Medical Center and leave behind a legacy that continues to provide access to care that Chicago's south side communities need.

Currently, I serve as CEO of Pittsburgh Mercy, an integrated health care home and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic and one of the largest health and human service nonprofit organizations and employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. In this role, and throughout my career, I have worked for organizations that address the health care needs of vulnerable populations. Prior to my time here, I worked in a public health capacity as the First Deputy Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, where, among other things, I worked closely with many of the area FQHCs, and subsequently ran the Lake County Health Department. Through these leadership roles, I have seen the trends in health needs for underserved communities in Chicago shift from inpatient to outpatient care.

When considering the closure of a hospital, all of us in healthcare need to consider the entire network of care available in the community. There are plenty of inpatient beds on Chicago's south side, and the use of beds at Mercy Hospital has been declining for years. The FQHCs in Chicago are providing exceptional care on the south side of Chicago, primarily when it comes to addressing the needs for primary care. The urgent care and diagnostic imaging services that will be offered at the Mercy Care Center will complement the good work happening at the FQHCs and respond to a currently unmet need of the local communities.

I know first-hand that closing a safety-net hospital is hard yet sometimes necessary. When done right, the hospital manages a smooth transition to other local providers and leaves behind a legacy that continues to serve the community. Mercy's plans include those two important steps. Its center will strengthen access to the affordable care the community needs – something we know is important in ensuring no family has to choose between basic necessities and health care. Importantly, the center will offer significant access to the uninsured and underinsured residents who are most in need of the diagnostic services the plan proposes.

I urge your support of Mercy's transformation plans, including the discontinuation of inpatient services and opening an outpatient care center in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Beltran".

Tony Beltran
President & CEO, Pittsburgh Mercy

PITTSBURGH MERCY

A MEMBER OF TRINITY HEALTH, SERVING IN THE TRADITION OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY