



Illinois Occupational Therapy Association
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December 11, 2020

Dear Governor Pritzker and Members of the Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board:

On behalf of the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (IOTA), I am writing to you to express concern for the pending closure of Mercy Hospital in the Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. I am writing to ask for your support in providing state funds to keep its doors open, as the closure of Mercy Hospital will create a healthcare desert in a community that desperately needs its services. Mercy serves a predominately African American community, which has been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. We implore you to issue state funds to ensure that the hospital remains open and prevent thousands of patients from losing their access to healthcare.

Mercy also employs 1700 healthcare workers and other employees. It also trains future healthcare workers, including occupational therapy practitioners, to work with medically underserved communities by providing clinical education to healthcare students. In addition to the loss of access to healthcare services and jobs, colleges and universities of Chicagoland will lose student clinical placements. Mercy has been a valuable resource in preparing the future healthcare workers of Chicagoland to work in medically underserved communities, and its loss would negatively impact local healthcare educational programs.

The Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (IOTA) is the official representative of the occupational therapy profession in the state of Illinois, which currently has over 10,000 licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. Occupational therapy practitioners believe in social justice, equity, and in advocating for their clients. We are deeply concerned about the potential loss of this healthcare resource for the community it serves, particularly during the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are asking for your swift action in using state funding to keep Mercy Hospital Open. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne Kiraly-Alvarez, OTD, OTR/L, SCSS
President
Illinois Occupational Therapy Association