

October 29, 2020

From: Fran LaMonica, RN, MS

To: Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board

Re: Save Mercy Hospital and Medical Center

I am writing this letter to urge you to Save Mercy Hospital which is being threatened to be closed by the Trinity Health System. My motivation is both professional and personal.

Mercy Hospital and Medical Center, Chicago's 1<sup>st</sup> Hospital, has provided care to a very under-served population in the inner city of Chicago. In fact, at the time that the current hospital building was built (1960s), the Sisters of Mercy determined that this site was necessary to continue to care for the community and fought those who wanted it to be moved to the suburbs. Mercy has been providing comprehensive care since 1852. It is an educational site for physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, physical and occupational health therapists.

I began my professional career at Mercy in 1971 while in Nursing School and continued until 2014 with a four year reprieve to work for the Illinois Department of Public Health. Throughout this period, Mercy's mission was to provide quality care for the poor and under served in the community with dignity and respect. The majority of Mercy's patients are from the Black, Hispanic, and Chinese populations. They require bilingual and culturally sensitive and competent care, which Mercy has been known to provide. The patients have developed relationships of trust with Mercy physicians and staff.

In the current COVID 19 pandemic, Mercy's care for the medical and emotional needs of its patients from a culturally sensitive perspective is even more necessary. Many of the Mercy patients rely on the fact that they can reach the hospital via public transportation and that it is ideally located within 20 minutes of any part of Chicago and some suburbs.

Employees of Mercy understood that our work was sacred and valued by the community we served by wonderful leadership we had. During my work with IDPH, I led inspections of hospitals and other health facilities. In very few, did I feel the spirit of caring and patient satisfaction that was present at Mercy. Although I had opportunities to work at other hospitals, I chose to return to Mercy for that reason.

There have been many errors made during this current pandemic which has placed patients in uncomfortable, and from the perspective of 'feeling safe,' a more vulnerable state. In addition, changes to healthcare insurance during the past 4 years has made many of the Mercy community under or uninsured. Closing Mercy Hospital & Medical Center at this time is a major mistake that will leave the community in an insecure position.

As a Registered Nurse, it is with deep concern for the community that I ask that Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board intervene to keep Mercy Hospital & Medical Center open to care for the under-served and under/uninsured patients with specific cultural needs.

Thank you for considering this heartfelt request.

**Exhibit #**

**Mercy 03**

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