

December 28, 2020

Courtney Avery  
Board Administrator  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street, Floor 2  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Ms. Avery:

I hope you and your staff had a wonderful, well deserved holiday break. I'm writing asking you to vote 'no' on the Ortho Illinois proposed ambulatory surgery center in Elgin, which will be located only a few blocks from my hospital. I want to dispel one of the justifications you may hear from others about how this project will benefit the hospital.

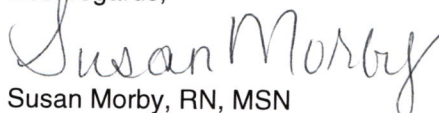
As the Chief Nursing Officer at Advocate Sherman in Elgin, I'm very proud of the care we provide our patients, and I couldn't be prouder of our response to COVID-19. I fully expect that when you vote on this project in late January we will continue to have a large cohort of COVID positive patients in Sherman's beds. Some may assert that having an ambulatory surgery center benefits the hospital as it allows the hospital to focus more resources on our COVID inpatients and less on outpatient services, such as surgery. This is a false assertion. In fact, we have never voluntarily stopped or slowed ambulatory surgery at Advocate Sherman and many surrounding hospitals have not stopped these services or only done so temporarily. We did temporarily stop elective outpatient surgery early in the pandemic but only because we were forced to do so due to State mandates, not because we needed to reallocate resources to deal with the COVID surge. At that time, even local ambulatory surgery centers temporarily discontinued procedures.

It is true that at times we have limited inpatient surgeries during surges to ensure we have enough inpatient beds for our emergency and COVID patients, but limiting inpatient surgeries is very different than limiting outpatient surgeries. We take every precaution to keep our patients safe and have learned a lot during these past few months. These learnings allow us to continue all outpatient procedures without concern that we may be putting patients unnecessarily in harm's way. Everyday we evaluate our inpatient census to determine if we should limit the number of inpatient surgeries in case we need to hold open beds for emergency COVID patients. This daily evaluation allows us the flexibility to adjust our inpatient surgical schedule and provides us the ability to project census going forward. In talking with my counterparts at other hospitals, they are taking the same approach and are not disrupting elective, outpatient surgeries.

The Elgin community is fortunate to have a number of different surgical options for patients including Advocate Sherman Hospital, AMITA St. Joe's Hospital, Algonquin Road Surgery Center and Northwestern Huntley. Access to timely surgical procedures is not a problem that demands a solution for our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my opinion and for your support of hospitals and health care workers during these trying times.

Best regards,



Susan Morby, RN, MSN  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Advocate Sherman Hospital