

June 29, 2021

Ms. Debra Savage, Chair  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
25 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

RE: OrthoIllinois Surgery Center Elgin, LLC ("OrthoIllinois")  
Project No. 20-040, Letter of Concern Regarding Safety Net Services

Dear Ms. Savage,

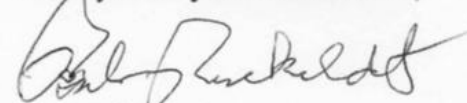
If the last year has taught us anything, it's how powerful healthcare workers are. When most of us were staying home, they were at work, covered from head-to-toe in protective gear, separated from their families and caring for ours as if they were their own. We recognize the emotional, physical and mental toll that caring for so many sick and dying COVID-19 patients – 60,000 cases in Kane County alone – took on those front-line heroes.

What we don't acknowledge is the impact that providing that care, at times exclusive to all else, took on the hospitals themselves. According to a recent report from the American Hospital Association, nationally our hospitals and health systems lost an average of \$50.7 billion per month during the height of the pandemic. Our local hospitals are not immune to these losses, and I don't want to compound the loss by eliminating vital revenue from orthopedic surgeries via a new specialty surgery center, which is under your review as Project No. 20-040. This new surgery center would hurt our local hospitals, at a time when they can least afford it. Did I mention that the application is for a facility right across the street from an existing hospital which offers orthopedic surgery services? This is no way to repay the sacrifice and courage of our local healthcare providers.

Despite the significant financial realities, our hospitals stepped up, not only providing care at the bedside and administering vaccines when they became available, but educating our community about how to protect ourselves and the people we love. One example was recently featured in the *Daily Herald* newspaper, a partnership between Advocate Sherman Hospital and the Gail Borden Public Library to help our Spanish-speaking residents, some of the hardest hit by COVID-19, get more information about the virus via a series of Facebook Live events. I've attached it here for your review.

I urge the Board to vote "no" on Project No. 02-040 as submitted by OrthoIllinois. If constructed, it will take critical revenue from our local hospitals that they need to continue to offer safe, quality care despite the significant financial impact of the pandemic and hinder our local hospitals ability to offer free programming and services, like the library series, to people who need it.

Thank you for your consideration,



Bob Ruckoldt

cc: Courtney Avery, Administrator

Enclosure: "Letter to the Editor: Innovative ways found to respond to pandemic," *Daily Herald*. 14 June 2021.

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# Innovative ways found to respond to pandemic

Updated  
6/14/2021 9:23 AM

Libraries have always been places where the community turns for information. At the Gail Borden Public Library District, we aim to be a great equalizer by creating opportunity for transformation to flourish for all, fueled by the power of community. COVID-19 brought new meaning to that mission.

We saw how this pandemic disproportionately affected communities of color, including many Hispanic residents in our city of Elgin. We wanted to help answer any questions or dispel any myths that our Hispanic community had about COVID-19, so we turned to the dedicated team at Advocate Sherman Hospital who had been battling this pandemic since the beginning.

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Paola Velasquez, Juan Rivero Huerta, Ben Castells, Alejandra Pastrano, Angelica Jaquinde and Dr. Dorothea Poulos took their work outside of the hospital walls to conduct three Facebook Live events in Spanish and connect directly with the Hispanic community. Together, these livestreams garnered more than 8,000 views; a number that tells us our Spanish-speaking friends and neighbors were looking for this information.

This pandemic has forced us all to re-examine the inequities within our communities and how we address them. We will continue to look for innovative ways to meet the need and for partners willing to help us.

Tina Viglucci, Director of Hispanic Services

Gail Borden Public Library

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