

April 14, 2021

Courtney Avery, Administrator  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: Quincy Medical Group Hospital, Project # 20-044

Dear Ms. Avery:

As an orthopedic surgeon who served patients in the Quincy community, and as a former resident of Quincy during that same time, I am writing to express my strong support for Quincy Medical Group Hospital.

Quincy Medical Group is a high-performing, multi-specialty physician group that has been a true leader in healthcare in the Tri-State region for nearly 85 years. I was fortunate to practice with The Quincy Clinic and Quincy Medical Group for more than 35 years before retiring in 2015. My wife and I have each been hospitalized at Blessing Hospital, and my son and two grandchildren were born there. I do not harbor ill-will toward Blessing, but the greatest regret of my career was that “my” hospital seemed to become dedicated to destroying QMG, which I had spent my career building.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, I had admitting privileges at both Blessing Hospital and the former St. Mary Hospital in Quincy. To my recollection, St. Mary Hospital was perceived as a less expensive hospital than Blessing Hospital during that time. The two hospitals initially decided to combine or merge to form one entity, Provident Hospital, which would operate and control both hospitals. The hospitals proposed that the merger would result in better management of costs, increased cost-effectiveness, and improvements in quality. After four years, the merger, however, fell through —primarily, to my understanding, related to Blessing Hospital’s disagreement over the new hospital board’s selection of a chief executive officer and Blessing Hospital’s perceived lack of meaningful control over the new hospital. As a result, Blessing Hospital increased its purchase price and bought out St. Mary Hospital. While camouflaged as a merger or combining of hospitals, St. Mary Hospital was *purchased* by Blessing Hospital.

As acknowledged in a letter of opposition from a representative of a hospital owned by Blessing Health System, there was “much heartache and angst” as a result of the purchase. Several of my physician colleagues recall physician relationships with Blessing Hospital administration worsening after the purchase once the competing hospital was gone. I am not aware of meaningful, long-term hospital cost reductions or quality improvements that specifically resulted from the St. Mary Hospital purchase.

It is my understanding that hospital costs in Quincy remain above-average and likely due, in large part, to a lack of competition. Quincy Medical Group Hospital will introduce necessary competition, result in meaningful reduced healthcare costs, and allow Quincy Medical Group to continue transforming the delivery of healthcare in the region by addressing the needs of their patients and the community while simultaneously planning for the future.

I urge the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve Quincy Medical Group Hospital's certificate of need permit application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Holt", written in a cursive style.

William Holt, MD