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618-253-7671

June 25, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Avery,

My name is Donald Hutson and I have the honor of serving as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Harrisburg Medical Center (HMC). I wish to express my wholehearted support of HMC joining Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH).

Due to its size, geographic location, and financial situation, HMC has had a difficult time recruiting and retaining physician specialists and sub-specialists needed to care for the population in southeastern Illinois. SIH has committed to recruiting needed specialists and sub-specialists across a wide range of medical and surgical services which will allow people of this area to receive high quality care close to their home.

HMC's inpatient behavioral health unit operates at or near full capacity at all times. Previous plans for expanding the number of inpatient behavioral health beds were halted due to financial reasons. Initial planning for a medical/psychiatric unit were postponed as well due to funding issues. HMC's joining SIH will ensure that resources are in place to expand behavioral health services in this region of the state.

In addition to expanding behavioral health, medical, and surgical services allowing expanded access to care, patient safety and quality will be greatly enhanced as SIH will install Epic as the electronic health record at HMC, replacing the current system with one which is an industry leader and considered by some to be best in class. The installation of Epic will enhance the flow of patient information with the patient as they progress through the complete continuum of healthcare services regardless of the geographic location in which the healthcare is provided. HMC's current system does not allow for that in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

With the expansion of healthcare services, the increased number of patients seen on an inpatient and outpatient basis in Harrisburg will increase thereby increasing the need for more healthcare workers: more nurses, more radiology technicians, more laboratory technicians, and more support staff in the areas of housekeeping and food service. These additional jobs will greatly benefit this rural community.

Once again, I want to express my wholehearted support of HMC joining Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH). The patients, the staff and the community will benefit greatly as this action will increase access to care, quality of care and patient safety.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald H. Hutson", written over a horizontal line.

Donald H. Hutson, FACHE  
President/CEO



Advancing Healthcare in our community... everyday.