



*Dr. Jonah Rice, Ph.D.*  
*President*

*Celebrating Excellence*

July 6, 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:

This letter serves as my support for the transaction between Harrisburg Medical Center (HMC) in Harrisburg, IL and Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH) with corporate offices in Carbondale, IL. As the president of the local community college (Southeastern Illinois College, SIC) with highly successful educational programs for LPNs, RNs, and other allied health disciplines, this transaction should provide positive outcomes for my college students and the region as a whole.

As for the educational benefits, my students will benefit from the transaction by having an increased variety of clinical opportunities close to home as the transaction will grow both the depth and breadth of medical services available in southeastern Illinois. Our students will have closer and greater access to specialists and benefit from learning in enhanced facilities and up-to-date technology. The need for nurses and the growth in educational opportunities for our health occupation needs will be highly beneficial to SIC students. While SIC boasts the highest NCLEX scores of all community colleges and most universities south of I-80, the increased clinical and educational opportunities for students will be most welcome.

More broadly speaking, this transaction between HMC and SIH will provide broader health care services to the people in this region of southern Illinois. The mission of HMC can be extended through this transaction with SIH, as the two focus on affordable and accessible healthcare to make southern Illinois a healthier place to live. This transaction also will have a positive economic impact on residents. We expect the transaction will result in HMC having streamlined financial operations and increased technological capabilities to meet the needs of patients. Additionally, we believe this transaction will provide an increase in grant opportunities as a result of the transaction. Finally, the

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*Southeastern Illinois College enhances lifelong learning by providing quality accessible educational programs, cultural enrichment opportunities, and support for economic development.*

transaction will provide an increased ability to grow the local workforce in healthcare occupations.

In sum, please know that I fully support this transaction between HMC and SIH. As a frequent user of both HMC and SIH, I know this union will provide great benefits for all involved. Please let me know if I can provide additional information.

Regards and Respects,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Jonah Rice', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonah Rice, PhD  
SIC President