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1.25.22

RE: Javon Bea Hospital Rockton Avenue

Dear Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board:

We write this letter today to express our concern over the continued reductions and closures at the Javon Bea Mercyhealth Rockton Avenue Campus. As an organization that serves people with disabilities, we recognize the barriers that exist in health care for affordable and accessible services and know that these reductions and closures create more barriers to service.

In April of 2020 Mercyhealth announced that they would not be accepting patients from a number of Managed Care companies, this action gave patients a couple of months to find a new provider.

In August of 2020, Mercyhealth announced they will be providing only outpatient and clinic services at its Rockton Avenue location

In September of 2020, despite community advocacy, Mercy Health was permitted to discontinue inpatient mental health services on their Rockton Avenue Campus

In November of 2021, Mercyhealth announced that they will stop providing inpatient surgical services at the Rockton Ave. Campus

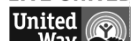
It is of note to us that all of these announced reductions and reallocations of services were done during a pandemic where the need for physical and mental health care for residents became even more apparent.

We have great hospital systems in our community that provide residents with many options for services. Mercyhealth's Rockton Avenue Campus primarily serves Rockford's west side. For those residents, the continued elimination of services and concern that the hospital will eventually close entirely, adds additional stress and barriers to health care access within their community. We know that the other hospitals in the Rockford region will do their very best to pick up where Mercy has fallen short. The elimination of services and potential rumored closure of the Rockton Campus puts a further strain on our transportation system, negatively impacts our economy, reduces job opportunities, and potentially puts people at risk of not being able to receive health care in an accessible way, if they face barriers related to things like transportation or insurance type.

ADA AMERICANS WITH
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BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY THAT ENCOURAGES INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



CEO of Mercyhealth Javon Bea in an Op-Ed for the Rockford Register Star stated, "Mercyhealth is 100% committed to the Rockford region and the remarkable people in our community. The idea that we are trying to close the Rockton campus systematically is the furthest thing from the truth." The closure and reallocation of services, like the examples listed above, leaves the community wondering how strong that commitment is to residents who rely on the Rockton Avenue Campus.

It is our hope that Mercyhealth honors its stated commitment to the residents of the City of Rockford and works with local, state, and federal leadership to come to resolutions that do not limit or eliminate options for Rockford residents with disabilities seeking medical care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Brown", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Brown, BS, CTRS

RAMP Education and Advocacy Coordinator