

Please do not allow Mercyhealth to close the Rockton Avenue hospital. The residents on the westside of Rockford DESERVE and NEED high quality health care that is easily accessible.

In 2015 Mercy Rockford Health System applied to the Illinois Services Review Board for Certificate of Need approval for plans to add a second Rockford hospital campus on the far eastside of Rockford. The Hearing for approval was held in a Chicago suburb at a country club. This was hardly convenient for the residents of the westside of Rockford to attend so their voices could be heard! However, there was a small contingent of us from the westside who spoke against the location of the new hospital because we understood that it would mean that the new hospital which was across town for the residents of the westside would not be easily accessible and the current hospital would also slowly deteriorate. Javon Bea brought in 2 bus loads of **employees, all in matching t-shirts**, to testify to how wonderful it would be to have a brand-new hospital on the eastside of Rockford. This is the difference of what can be done when you have wealth! **This is what systemic racism looks like!** The westside of Rockford is where the majority of Black and Brown folks live. The area close to the new hospital is clearly a majority White area.

In 2015, the promise the Mercyhealth Board of Directors made when they were seeking permission to build the new hospital was:

“To maintain a N. Rockton Avenue campus, providing hospital-based and outpatient services to its patients and investing \$50 million in capital improvements over the next ten years...”

The following recent headlines would be evidence they are not keeping their promise:

“Mercyhealth to stop providing inpatient surgical services at Rockton hospital”

“Mercyhealth closes PICU...”

“Mercyhealth receives approval to close in-patient mental health services at Rockton campus”

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