

**From:** [Daniel Davis](#)  
**To:** [DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Public Comment Regarding - E-056-21 Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton, Rockford  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 25, 2022 6:06:20 PM

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**TO:** [DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings@illinois.gov](mailto:DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings@illinois.gov)

**FROM:** Daniel Davis

**DATE:** January 25, 2022

**SUBJ: Public Hearing - E-056-21 Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton, Rockford**

Dear members of the Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board,

My name is Daniel Davis and I am a resident of Rockford, Illinois. I'm writing to you today to express my **strong opposition** to the recent decision by MercyHealth to eliminate the 70-bed medical surgical category of service at Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton on Rockford's west side.

This reduction in services by MercyHealth is yet another disrespectful blow to our community, and follows a series of other significant cuts made at this specific location—all of which greatly impact the level of care that west side residents of Rockford like myself can receive close to home.

As of the past few years, MercyHealth has eliminated both trauma and mental health care services at its Rockton Ave hospital. More recently, the hospital's emergency room was converted last month into a "standby" facility staffed by nurses and with a physician on call—not physically in the hospital itself. Recent reports have shown that wait times at this facility have reached as long as 6 hours. Currently, the Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton is the only emergency room on Rockford's west side.

As a resident of Rockford's west side—a predominantly diverse and lower income section of the city—the Javon Bea Hospital-Rockton campus is the closest hospital for myself, my family, and countless other residents who call this part of town home. These reductions in services could not have come at a worse time for our city. As COVID rates, crime rates, poverty rates, and traffic fatalities rise in Rockford, now is not the time to gut services and eliminate hospital beds for the part of town that needs them the most. Countless lives will be impacted, and potentially lost, if MercyHealth continues its attrition of services on the west side of Rockford.

I fundamentally believe that healthcare is a human right that should be free and accessible to everyone, no matter their zip code, what they look like, or how much money they have. These recent decisions by MercyHealth to cut services—especially at a time when they are desperately vital—perfectly exemplifies the problems with the for-profit healthcare system in

America.

MercyHealth has cited staffing shortages, consolidation, and most importantly, financial hardships as the reasons behind many of the recent service cuts at its Rockton Avenue hospital. At the same time, MercyHealth's CEO Javon Bea—the man whose name is on the hospital building that I'm writing about—received a salary of \$9.3 million as recently as 2018. MercyHealth also compensates several board members (including Illinois State Senator Dave Syverson), and employs at least 12 vice presidents making more than \$200,000 a year, six making more than \$350,000 annually and three making more than \$500,000. To cite “financial hardships” as a reason for cutting services is absolutely absurd and a slap in the face to the citizens of Rockford's west side neighborhoods and the city as a whole—a city which has given out millions of dollars worth of financial incentives, tax breaks, and grants as a show of good faith to MercyHealth since its merger with Rockford Health System in 2014.

Enough is enough. I implore the members of the Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board to step in and do what's right. Please stop MercyHealth from gutting even more services at its Rockton Avenue hospital.

The health of Rockford's 150,000 residents—especially those on the west side—depends on it.

Sincerely,

Daniel Davis  
Rockford, IL

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