



Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
900 Main Street, Suite 720
Peoria, Illinois 61602

Ryan Finkenbine, MD
Professor and Chair

June 8, 2022

Chairwoman Debra Savage and Members
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Re: Project No. 22-017 – Letter of Support
Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Campus

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Members:

This letter is submitted in support of the proposed child and adolescent behavioral health campus in Peoria. On behalf of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine and the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria (UICOMP), we are delighted to provide this letter of support. Our organization serves the community by providing direct patient care for children and adolescents and educating the next generation of psychiatric and pediatric physicians. There is a critical need to expand behavioral health access and improve quality across the continuum of care for child, adolescents and their families in our community

The problems associated with inadequate access to behavioral healthcare are pervasive across Central Illinois. This is well-documented in numerous studies including the Heart of Illinois 2020 United Way Needs Assessment which found mental health to be the number one health priority in Central Illinois. Nearly five million children in the United States have some type of serious mental illness that significantly interferes with daily life. Annually, 20% of American children will be diagnosed with a mental illness. Central Illinois is not exempt from this alarming statistic and thousands of children have been unable to receive the care they need due to lack of capacity in our region. We recognize that children and adolescents are not receiving the care they need at a time that is critical to ensure a healthy future.

In response to this crisis, we joined with UnityPoint Health – Methodist and other community organizations to form the Youth and Family Behavioral Health Collaborative

to meet the behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and their families. The goal of the collaborative is to improve access to, and the delivery of mental health and substance abuse treatment services through transformative treatment facilities and programs. We determined that to achieve this objective we need to transition the current delivery model to a hub-and-spoke model designed to optimize access to child and adolescent behavioral health care across the continuum and implement outreach services and educational programs to improve health literacy.

At the core of the collaborative's transformational plan is the establishment of UnityPoint Health – Methodist's proposed state-of-the art child and adolescent behavioral health campus. UnityPoint Health – Methodist is the only hospital in our region that provides child and adolescent inpatient behavioral health services. Over the last five years, however, 2,500 children and adolescents have been unable to receive local inpatient due to insufficient capacity and resources. UnityPoint Health Methodist provides the only regional inpatient options, so when beds are filled, children are forced to travel hours away, to an unfamiliar place, away from family, for services. We have also encountered families and children in crisis who are simply overwhelmed by "the system" and who have struggled to find the time, resources, and strength to pursue the services needed to help their children heal, grow, and succeed.

The proposed campus would provide greatly needed inpatient and outpatient mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment, therapies, and resources for children and families in one welcoming, convenient, comfortable and central location at an affordable cost. This hub will serve Illinois' children, adolescents and their families through increased bed capacity, adaptable management across the continuum of care, integration of services, coordination of physical and mental health programs, and through collaboration with community partners, including UICOMP. The project will contribute to establishing the infrastructure and resources needed for outstanding care when, where, and how it's needed in our community and has our full support.

We are incredibly excited about our continued partnership and collaboration with UnityPoint Health – Methodist to truly transform care in our community and we urge your approval of this innovative project.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by Ryan
Finkenbine
Date: 2022.06.08 16:41:53
-05'00'

Ryan Finkenbine, MD
Professor and Chair
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine