

June 14, 2022

Chairwoman Debra Savage
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

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

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Members:

As CEO of the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC) and a Peoria resident for nearly 20 years, I am writing in strong support of Project No. 22-017. Our community has many strengths, but it is also plagued by poverty and violence that adversely affects our youth's mental health and wellbeing.

Last year, GPEDC completed and approved the *Big Table Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, a five year strategic plan that will help guide the region to greater economic resiliency and success. That framework includes strategies to "foster and facilitate healthy lifestyle choices for improved health outcomes and individual prosperity." That is why our organization partners with and I am proud to serve on the board of the Partnership for a Healthy Community, a public health action group composed of local health departments, our two hospital systems and other stakeholders. This group recently identified mental health as a key priority to be addressed over the next few years.

I am acutely aware that investment in our community's public health – specifically, the health of our youth – could not be more important. No child should go without the care they need because of their zip code. Unfortunately, however, this is happening in our community. UnityPoint Health-Methodist Hospital, the only provider in our community of child and adolescent inpatient behavioral health services, simply does not have the ability within its current building and resources to meet the current and growing behavioral health needs of our youth. The proposed child and adolescent behavioral health campus will address these unmet needs and provide children and their families in our community with increased access to quality behavioral health services close to home. From an economic perspective, healthy and mentally strong children have better chances to become productive members of the workforce.

I also applaud UnityPoint Health's decision to purchase and renovate the former Heddington Oaks nursing home into the proposed state-of-the-art behavioral health campus. The transformation of a vacant property into a state-of-the-art facility brings both capital investment and jobs to a vital part of our community.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this project and request. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Christopher Setti
Chief Executive Officer