

June 20, 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 Chairman of the Peoria County Board 377 Board and a lifelong native of Peoria, I am writing in strong support of Project No. 22-017.

As the Chairman of the Care and Treatment Board for Peoria County, I have the opportunity to see firsthand the community need for mental health services. This has reached crisis proportion in our community.

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.

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. While it was a difficult decision for County officials to close the nursing home and sell the property, I strongly believe this was the best outcome for both the community as the facility will continue to be used for non-profit healthcare purposes that will greatly improve the health and wellbeing of our youth.

I ask that you approve this worthy and important project.

Sincerely,

Todd Baker
Chairman, Peoria County 377, (Care and Treatment), Board