

Illinois House of Representatives

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Jehan Gordon-Booth

Deputy Majority Leader • Speaker Pro Tempore
State Representative • 92nd District

June 15, 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
Peoria Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Campus

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Members:

Please accept this letter expressing my strong support of the proposed child and adolescent behavioral health campus in Peoria.

My hometown – Peoria – is in desperate need of a transformative approach to healthcare - specifically, mental health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment services. As the State Representative for the 92nd District, I have seen and understand the trauma and tragedies that too many families in the Tri-County Area experience. In fact, my family has first-hand, personal experience with the devastating violence that plagues the Peoria area and its families. Although we are fortunate to have quality community organizations and healthcare services, those organizations and services are underfunded and overwhelmed because the demand for those services far exceeds what is currently available.

Last year, UnityPoint Health – Methodist and several other community organizations and providers formed a collaborative to effectively address and meet the behavioral health needs of children, adolescents, and their families in the Peoria region. While there are many health care needs in Peoria and the surrounding counties, behavioral health care is one of great concern of residents in our region. The objective of the collaborative — the Youth and Family Behavioral Health Collaborative — is to improve access to, and the delivery of, child and adolescent behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment services through the establishment of transformative treatment facilities and programs. The collaborative determined that to achieve this objective, the current care delivery model needed to be transformed into a hub-and-spoke model designed to increase 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, UnityPoint Health – Methodist had to turn away more than 2,500 children and adolescents requiring inpatient behavioral health treatment due to insufficient capacity and resources at its existing facility. We do not have another local option for child and adolescent inpatient behavioral health treatment, so when UnityPoint Health – Methodist is at capacity and/or unable to immediately provide inpatient care for these patients, they are forced to travel hours away to receive services in an unfamiliar place away from their families.

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, and central location at an affordable cost (i.e., offering Medicaid-eligible services and services at no- or low-cost). The proposed campus will break down barriers to care and increase access to high-quality, culturally competent care close to home for youth in our community who need it most.

I believe an innovative and transformational approach to pediatric and adolescent behavioral health is critically important to the Tri-County Region, particularly Peoria County. I fully support this proposal that brings healthcare providers and community organizations together to develop a unified, efficient, and effective approach to reach and serve more families in crisis.

I urge your approval of this innovative project.

Sincerely,



Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth
Speaker Pro Tempore – Deputy Majority Leader