



Children's Home Association of Illinois

2130 Knoxville Ave.
Peoria, IL 61603
(309) 685-1047
CHAIL.org

June 20, 2022

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
Attn: John Kniery, Administrator
525 West Jefferson Street, Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

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

Dear Mr. Kniery:

Children's Home Association of Illinois ("CHAIL") is proud to submit this letter in support of the Young Minds Institute, Project No. 22-017.

For more than 156 years, CHAIL has provided community support services to at-risk youth in Peoria and the surrounding Tri-County Area. We strongly believe every child deserves an opportunity to succeed, and we are committed to raising up our community by transforming the lives of at-risk youth and families through education, clinical and community support, prevention services, and residential placement services.

Last year we formed a collaborative with UnityPoint Health – Methodist and several other community organizations and providers to effectively address and meet the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents in our area. 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 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. We determined that to achieve this objective, the current care delivery model needed to be transformed into a hub-and-spoke model that would increase access to child and adolescent behavioral health care across the continuum while implementing outreach services and educational programs to improve health literacy.

At the core of the collaborative's 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 essential 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



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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 or unable to immediately provide inpatient care for these patients, they are forced to wait in the emergency department for an available hospital bed or travel hours away to receive services in an unfamiliar place away from their families. 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 Young Minds Institute 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. The proposed Young Minds Institute will break down barriers to care and increase access to high-quality behavioral health services close to home for the youth in our community who need it most.

We are excited about our continued partnership with UnityPoint Health – Methodist to transform care in our community and change the lives of the kids who will change the world.

We urge your approval of this important project.

Sincerely,

Stephanie AlKhafaji
Interim President and CEO
Children's Home Association of Illinois