

September 10, 2023

Chairwoman Debra Savage and Members
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

RE: Springfield Clinic – Springfield Clinic Ambulatory Surgery Center Establishment of Cardiac Catheterization: Letter of Opposition

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Members of the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board:

I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to Springfield Clinic's Certificate of Need ("CON") application to establish cardiac catheterizations at the Springfield Clinic Ambulatory Surgery Center. It is my belief that, if approved, this project will lead to substandard care and increased health disparities for our community. As a health equity leader in Springfield, Illinois who has spent their fifteen- year career working to improve the quality of life for underserved and marginalized communities, I feel strongly that if approved, this project will undermine current and future efforts that seek to avoid duplication of healthcare services, reduce costs, and empower our most vulnerable citizens.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings, Sangamon County ranks #5 in Clinical Care out of the 102 counties in Illinois. Clinical Care is anything related to the direct medical treatment or testing of patients. In essence, Sangamon County has more clinical services than 97 counties in the state. Additionally, Sangamon County has some of the best ratios of primary care and specialist physicians per 100,000 population in the state. From my perspective, Sangamon County does not have a clinical care issue, it has a specialist accessibility issue for those who are underserved, including Medicaid enrollees. Sangamon County currently has a preventable hospital stay rate of 3,947, which is a reflection of the number of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 100,000 Medicare enrollees. This rate is significantly higher than most counties in the state of Illinois, despite having more physicians per capita than most in the state and an outstanding clinical care score ranking. I think the data clearly shows that Sangamon County does not have a clinical care issue or need access to more services, but that it needs more facilities and providers truly committed to serving the underserved as demonstrated by their long-standing history.

While a cardiac catheterization is a common procedure used to diagnose or treat heart problems, it does not come without risk. Heart attacks, strokes, bleeding, and blood clots are just some of the complications that could arise with the procedure. These risks are why cardiac

catheterizations should be performed in a supervised hospital setting where resources are available to minimize the opportunity for them to become major complications, unlike an ambulatory surgery setting.

In addition to this increased chance for patient harm, the approval of this project would also worsen health disparities among people of color and marginalized groups. As you are probably aware, Medicaid is the public health insurance program funding health care for low-income families. It is estimated that 26% of all Illinois residents are covered by Medicaid, and almost 86% of those covered are people of color.

Yet, Springfield Clinic's CON application clearly states patients covered by Medicaid comprise only 5% of their total cardiology visits. Unlike our Illinois hospitals, which provide billions of dollars in true charity care annually and take care of all patients regardless of their ability to pay, Springfield Clinic provides no charity care. In fact, the Safety Net Impact Statement in the application highlights that payment plans would be necessary for those not covered under a third-party insurance plan. Simply put, the increased patient access referenced in several letters of support for this project will not be gained by the Medicaid or uninsured population. Instead, the for-profit Springfield Clinic will redirect commercially insured patients from hospitals well-equipped and most capable to safely provide this service – the same hospitals demonstrating stalwart support and service to their communities before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

I trust and believe that the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board prioritizes equity, fairness, and quality of care for patients when making decisions that impact the health and well-being of Illinois residents. Accordingly, I encourage you to oppose Springfield Clinic's request for cardiac catheterization services, project #22-027.

Sincerely,



Stacy Grundy, DrPH, MPH, MCHES
Former IHFSRB Board Member

cc: John Kniery