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BARBARA HERNANDEZ
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
50th DISTRICT

August 15, 2023

Mr. Fox 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 Mr. Fox 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 daughter of first generation immigrants, who were undocumented for 21 years, I know the daily obstacles, including receiving adequate and timely healthcare, that underserved and people of color face on a daily basis.

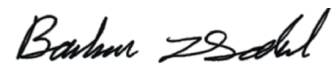
While a cardiac catheterization is a common procedure used to diagnose or treat heart problems, it does not come without risk. Heart attacks, strokes, bleeding, and blood clots are just some of the complications that could arise with the procedure. These risks are why cardiac catheterizations should 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. I can personally attest to this as a stroke survivor who was skillfully treated and compassionately cared for at a hospital this project would negatively impact. I have to think my situation might have ended differently and less favorable if projects like these, with the intent to redirect resources and support from our Illinois hospitals, are approved.

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.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Hernandez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Hernandez
State Representative, 50th District

cc: John Kniery