



September 13, 2023

Chairwoman Debra Savage and Members  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 appreciate the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board's consideration of my November 22, 2022 letter in opposition of Springfield Clinic's application for a Certificate of Need to establish cardiac catheterization services at its Ambulatory Surgery Center in Springfield. I am writing you again to reiterate 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 the leader of The Springfield Project (TSP), our mission is to unite Springfield, Illinois as a community by working to improve the quality of life for all throughout its neighborhoods, I feel strongly that if approved, this project undermine our goal of empowering low-income and minority citizens. TSP serves as an organization whose purpose is empowering low-income and minority citizens to identify and solve neighborhood problems through collaboration and partnership with various stakeholders. TSP's focus is on traditionally underserved and underrepresented neighborhoods throughout the City of Springfield. TSP does not only serve as a direct service provider, but also as an entity that facilitates systemic change within neighborhoods by bringing public and private resources to bear on community problems.

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,

Dominic Watson  
President, The Springfield Project

cc: John Kniery