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August 15, 2022

Debra Savage, Chairwoman
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Dear Chairwoman Savage,

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on the Certificate of Need application to establish a new acute mental illness category of service at Advocate South Suburban Hospital (Advocate South Sub). This application is part of an initiative with the dual purpose of 1) enhancing behavioral health facilities, services, and access in the South and Southwest Suburbs, and 2) relieving patient wait times in the Advocate Christ Medical Center (Advocate Christ) emergency department (ED). I write in full support of both efforts.

A lifelong resident of this community, I currently serve as the Mayor of Oak Lawn, which is home to Advocate Christ. I previously served as a Village Trustee and Park District Commissioner, respectively. I also served as a police officer in the Oak Lawn Police Department, and as a decorated Army veteran of the Vietnam War.

Advocate Christ is a critical part of the health and wellness of our community. As more people have come to the hospital seeking world-class care, the hospital has grown, and we have been happy to partner with Advocate Christ in that growth. And yet, demand for inpatient services out of the ED continues to expand beyond their current footprint. This has led to significant patient wait times in the ED and dozens of patients boarding there daily before being admitted.

Therefore, I was excited to hear of the investment Advocate intends to make at Advocate South Sub to create a brand new, state-of-the-art inpatient behavioral health unit that would not only relieve some of the pressure in the Advocate Christ Medical Center, but it would create a modern healing environment for those in need of acute mental health services across our region. Residents in Oak Lawn and across the South and Southwest Suburbs will be well served by this investment.

Please approve this application.

Sincerely,

Mayor Terry Vorderer
Village of Oak Lawn