



May 17, 2022

Debra Savage, Chairperson
Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761
**RE: Louis Weiss Memorial Hospital OPCO #E-027-22 and
Louis Weiss Memorial Hospital PROPCO #E-028-22**

Dear Ms. Savage and fellow members of the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board:

Lakeside Area Neighbors Association (LANA) in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood is a community block club for roughly 5,000 residents who live within its boundaries, which also include the Weiss Memorial Hospital campus. A demographic snapshot of drawn from the most recent American Community Survey (2020) may be viewed online at <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/14000US17031031501-census-tract-31501-cook-il/>. As LANA's goals are to ensure our community remains safe, inclusive, and welcoming to all who live, work, and play in our area, we are committed to helping Weiss Hospital to succeed and thrive. Because community members rely on Weiss for jobs and medical care, LANA is deeply concerned about the long-term health and viability of the hospital. Pipeline Health's recent contract to sell the hospital's last expansion land (4600 N. Marine) has compounded our concern for the long-term viability of Weiss Hospital, which is a key regional healthcare asset.

In mid-March, a Weiss representative contacted LANA to inform the organization of the potential change of ownership and to ask for any questions. Many questions and concerns were communicated to Weiss. A week after these questions were communicated, LANA received another call asking if LANA would write a letter in support of the change of ownership. As LANA had not received answers to the many questions from the prior week, we could not provide those answers to LANA's membership to begin the formal feedback process to arrive at a community consensus about the proposal. Therefore, **LANA is unable to support these applications at this time.**

Our remaining questions include the following:

1) Professional and financial backgrounds of the potential new owners

Concerns include:

- The long-term financial viability of this sale given that we have received no financial reports for either buyer—Manoj Prasad and Rathnaker Reddy Patlola.
- The gaps in information about the educational background, experience, and professional qualifications of Manoj Prasad. If this information is provided, it would help give the community assurance that he is adequately prepared to own and manage two hospitals in the Chicagoland area. Manoj Prasad has been asked on several occasions by the public and the IHFSRB but has not provided clear responses.

2) Return of a portion of the hospital sale price to fulfill Pipeline’s promise to use 100% of the proceeds¹ from the sale of the expansion land only at 4600 N Marine Dr at Weiss Hospital

The financials of the hospital regarding debts, revenues, and expenditures have not been provided in a clear format for the community to view and be able to understand the amounts listed in the application regarding the purchase price of Weiss Memorial Hospital. No written proof that funds from the sale of the expansion land at 4600 N Marine Dr will be reinvested in Weiss has been provided to the public. Concerns especially about the exact content of the current acquisition agreement are exacerbated by the negative fallout from Pipeline’s past acquisition agreements concerning its Illinois hospitals, with which the board is familiar.

3) Impact of the loss of the expansion land on Weiss Hospital’s future

The hospital expansion area at 4600 N Marine Dr, which was the site of clinical services such as COVID treatments during the pandemic, was offered for sale in the end of 2019 without any notice to LANA. A buyer, Lincoln Properties, has an active contract for the land despite the ongoing stakeholder concerns about their proposed luxury apartment building. *Community members have yet to see evidence that the loss of this land will not substantially reduce Weiss’s capacity to grow and succeed in the future.*

Worth noting is that Pipeline Health, which made the decision that this land is “surplus,” has no long-term track record of keeping its Illinois hospitals viable. As the board is aware, shortly after coming to Illinois Pipeline filed bankruptcy for Westlake, one of the three Illinois hospitals it had acquired. Concerns about poor decision making about Weiss are heightened by the fact that as part of announcing the sale under consideration in these applications, Pipeline itself described “struggling to make these hospitals successful”²—despite its earlier assurances that sale of Weiss’s expansion land

would allow them to grow the hospital. Community members are also aware that taxpayers have funded much of Pipeline’s investment in its Illinois hospitals.

4) Loss of Weiss’s Urban Rooftop Farm

Our community lost important community resources and opportunities to weigh in about changes in the short time the sellers, Pipeline Health, owned Weiss Memorial Hospital. Especially damaging to local food security, climate mitigation, and physical and mental health was the sudden closure of Weiss Memorial Urban Rooftop Farm, an esteemed community-serving public health initiative.³ Although the applicants showed interest in food security in the recent public meeting and have stated they intend to form a community council to facilitate future relationship-building, there are no guarantees to date that the new owners will follow through or otherwise ensure that programs that benefit the community will be reinstated—or that they will not be dismantled in the future without community input.

We appreciate your review of these applications and ongoing outreach to the applicants for more information to fill in the information gaps in the applications and in the public record. Ultimately, thank you for your work and careful decision making to ensure that our local community hospital remains open and that it has the potential to thrive in our historic, vibrant, and diverse community.

Sincerely,

Lakeside Area Neighbors Association

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Addendum (links to information cited in letter):

¹ Irene Dumanis (CEO, Pipeline-Weiss Hospital). Chicago Plan Commission meeting, July 15, 2021. YouTube video (comments at ca. 5:51:00). <https://youtu.be/OKIncT7eoO4?t=21093>.

² Pipeline-Weiss Memorial Hospital. “Chicago Hospitals Plan for Change of Ownership, Weiss Hospital (blog), Mar 10, 2022, 8:00:00 AM. <https://blog.weisshospital.com/chicago-hospitals-plan-for-change-of-ownership>.

³ “Upfront: Chicago Hospital Program Helps Build Stronger Community Roots.” *Health Facilities Management* (American Hospital Association), December 2011.

<https://www.hfmmagazine.com/articles/654-chicago-hospital-program-helps-build-stronger-community-roots?msclkid=0cccd2b0cfa211ec81e6b476dc965f7f;>

“Weiss Hospital Grows Rooftop Urban Farm.” ABC7 (television news), June 21, 2012.

<https://abc7chicago.com/archive/8708389/?msclkid=c9a72109cf9d11ecb0399b79c266ff73;>

“Weiss Memorial Hospital’s Rooftop Farm and Farmer’s Market Take Root in Uptown for 6th Season,” Patch.com, updated Jun 25, 2015, 10:14 PM (CT).

<https://patch.com/illinois/lincolnpark/weiss-memorial-hospitals-rooftop-farm-farmers-market-take-root-uptown-6th-season?msclkid=e0d18ac8cfa111ec8ff93dda2ee28db7;>

“EcoHeroes: Weiss Memorial Rooftop Farm Community.” Worldview, WBEZ (public radio), Aug. 29, 2016, 11:12 AM (CT). <https://www.wbez.org/stories/ecoheroes-weiss-memorial-rooftop-farm-community/f5fa572a-63ed-470b-8e84-b65924b4d1b3>.