



Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing

A Tradition of Excellence in Nursing Education

February 14, 2023

Ms. Debra Savage, Chair
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

**RE: US HealthVest and OSF Healthcare System Adult Behavioral Health Hospital
Project: 23-008 Letter of Support**

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

This letter is submitted in support of the proposed adult behavioral health hospital in Peoria.

As an Illinois resident, I know firsthand the challenges our community faces with mental and behavioral health. While there are many health care needs in Illinois, behavioral health care continuously ranks as one of residents' top concerns. Individuals and families need and deserve access to these critically important services.


This proposed 100-bed adult hospital will increase access to behavioral health services throughout downstate Illinois. As the largest facility south of Chicago, it will provide greatly needed inpatient behavioral health resources for some of the most vulnerable individuals and families, regardless of ability to pay.

In addition to providing critical behavioral health beds in Illinois, this facility will meet another need. There is a critical shortage of behavioral health clinical sites for nursing students. I am the Undergraduate Dean at Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing and am able to speak first hand regarding the difficulty in finding clinical sites for my baccalaureate and graduate nursing students. This behavioral health facility would provide clinical resources for our next generations of nurses.

In addition to offering inpatient psychiatric beds, this hospital will have unique offerings such as dual diagnosis, geriatric and other specialty programs. This hospital will help fill the current and growing unmet need in Peoria and the surrounding area for inpatient psychiatric care, which often results in patients being deferred or even denied necessary mental health treatment.

I urge you to support the approval of the certificate of need application for US HealthVest and OSF. Approval of this application will increase access to these important services in our area.

Sincerely,


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