



SAINT FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER

February 15, 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 the Chief of Trauma Services at our Region's only Level 1 Trauma Center, I know firsthand the challenges that 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 our top concerns. Individuals and families need and deserve access to these critically important services.

In a 2019 study that evaluated serious mental illness amongst patients admitted to Level 1 Trauma Centers, the authors reported that 48% of Trauma Programs admitted 1-5 patients with preexisting serious mental illness on a weekly basis, 27% admitted 6-10 patient and 23% of Trauma Centers admitted more than 10 patients. Despite these staggering numbers, 55% of Trauma Centers did not have designated outpatient follow-up for acute or chronic psychiatric care for their injured patients. [Ortiz et. al, Academic Surgical Congress, 2019]

This proposed 100-bed adult hospital will increase access to behavioral health services throughout downstate Illinois and thus significantly improve our ability to care for the injured patient, which is an obligation that our team takes seriously. 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 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.



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Furthermore, this facility will help ensure patients are set up for long-term success through aftercare services, and patients and families will benefit from having the services they need available locally – saving both time and money.

I urge you to support the approval of the certificate of need application for US Health Vest and OSF. Approval of this application will increase access to these important services in our area. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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