



February 17, 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.

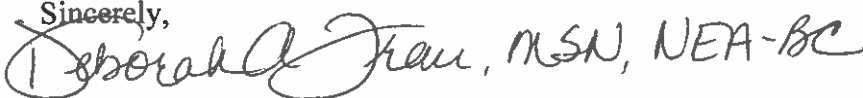
As a healthcare professional, I know firsthand the challenges our community faces with mental and behavioral health. While there are many health care needs in Illinois, behavioral health care continuously ranks as one of residents' top concerns. Individuals and families need and deserve access to these critically important services. Daily, in our emergency department, we are challenged to find appropriate and available resources for our behavioral health patients, particularly when needing inpatient treatment. These patients can spend many hours to several days, and occasionally a week, in the ED. The ED with constant activity and noise is not the best environment for the individual awaiting behavioral health treatment. As a healthcare professional, this is morally and ethically distressing knowing there are insufficient resources for our patients in need. We need to do better for these patients and families.

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 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.

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 HealthVest and OSF. Approval of this application will increase access to these important services in our area.

Sincerely,


Deborah A. Trau, MSN, NEA-BC
Nursing Director, Emergency Services
OSF Healthcare Saint Francis Medical Center and Children's Hospital of Illinois