

May 15, 2023

Ms. Debra Savage  
Chairwoman  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor  
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: University of Chicago Medicine - Cancer Facility Project Letter of Support

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

As the Pastor of Bright Star Church, Founder and CEO of Bright Star Community Outreach (BSCO), and Member of UChicago Medicine's Community Advisory Council, I write in support of the University of Chicago Medicine's (UCM) application for a proposed dedicated Cancer Facility as part of its Medical Center on Chicago's South Side. The proposed cancer facility will increase access to complex care for patients, offer convenient and compassionate care to neighborhoods where cancer is most prevalent, and bring a world class cancer facility to the city of Chicago.

Bright Star Community Outreach is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to youth & family anti-violence programs and improving the overall health in our community. BSCO has developed the TURN Center (The Urban Resilience Network) based on the Israeli model of NATAL in Tel Aviv. TURN endeavors to focus on five core competencies: counseling, parenting, mentorship, work-force development and advocacy. Its unique model will utilize faith and community leaders as trauma counselors and use community surveys as the basis for services that directly correspond to the unique needs of constituents. Additionally, BSCO serves as the community health lead organization in several South Side neighborhoods through Chicago's Near-South Health Equity Zone. Cancer is one of the health issues negatively impacting our neighbors and BSCO works with partners to address in our community.

UChicago Medicine addresses institutional, structural, and health inequities through the Urban Health Initiative (UHI), a community health department to administer our population health and community benefits programs. UHI's asset-based, community development approach is accomplished through collaboration with community programs and partners, innovative strategies, and the utilization of existing resources. BSCO is also located on the South Side of Chicago and is proud to be a longstanding partner of UChicago Medicine in improving the health of our community.

Residents on the South Side of Chicago are twice as likely to die from cancer compared to almost anywhere else in the United States. Cancer is also the second leading cause of death in our communities. We know that inequities in health outcomes related to cancer are largely a product of the social determinants of health, including access to cancer prevention and care. A new cancer facility will simply provide South Side

residents with healthcare resources that other neighborhoods in the city often take for granted.

Today, over half of South Side patients leave our area for the complex care they require. Research shows delayed care is directly correlated with worse health outcomes. Living farther from healthcare facilities creates longer lengths of hospital stay, non-attendance at follow ups visits, and increased overall disease burden. The proposed hospital will decrease the effects of delayed care for all South Side patients.

Building a world class cancer facility on the South Side will bring technologically advanced care incorporating the newest therapies and treatment innovations to a part of the city that has been historically underserved by the healthcare community. As one of only two NCI designated cancer facilities in the state of Illinois, a cancer facility constructed by UCM stands to reimagine cancer care for the South Side and the entire city of Chicago.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and I hope you will vote to approve UCM's application to build a cancer facility that will transform the lives of so many families in my community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Chris Harris, Sr.".

Pastor Chris Harris Sr.  
Pastor, Bright Star Church  
Founder and CEO, Bright Star Outreach