



May 24, 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,

On behalf of the Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE), 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.

Our organization works with residents on Chicago's southeast side, covering South Chicago, East Side, South Deering, Hegewisch, and Calumet Heights, to address local issues, including environmental justice. Southeast side residents have been combatting legacy and current pollution of manufacturing and heavy industry concentrated near residences, schools, and parks, that has resulted in high cancer rates, directly impacting residents and families, with whom we work.

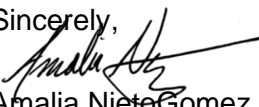
Residents on Chicago's south side are twice as likely to die from cancer compared to almost anywhere else in the United States. Cancer is also the second leading cause of death in our communities. We know that inequities in health outcomes related to cancer are largely a product of the social determinants 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. Many residents have limited local options/access to preventative care, cancer treatments, and caregiver support services, and face barriers for care, like transportation and mobility issues. 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.

ASE is a multicultural, interfaith, and intergenerational alliance of churches, schools, businesses, and community organizations that prioritize grassroots participation to address challenges facing southeast Chicago neighborhoods. ASE's mission is to build the capacity of leaders, organizers, and associations in order to carry out community and social change.

ASE fully supports UCM's efforts to open a dedicated Cancer Facility as part of its Medical Center on Chicago's southeast side. Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to vote in favor UCM's application to build a cancer facility that will transform lives of so many families in our communities.

Sincerely,  
  
Amalia Nieto Gomez  
Executive Director