

**SOUTH SIDE HEALTHY
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

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 CEO of the South Side Healthy Community Organization, I write to you 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.

The SSHCO was established with funding awarded in 2021 from the State of Illinois' Health Care Transformation initiative. SSHCO was established as a 501(c)(3) organization by a coalition of 13 health care organizations that care for patients on the South Side of Chicago: Advocate Trinity Hospital, Beloved Community Family Wellness Center, Chicago Family Health Center, Christian Community Health Center, Friend Health, Jackson Park Hospital, Near North Health, The New Roseland Community Hospital, Saint Bernard Hospital, Sinai Chicago – Holy Cross Hospital, South Shore Hospital, TCA Health, and University of Chicago Medicine. The SSHCO is seeking to strengthen the health care system of the South Side and ultimately improve the health of South Side communities by implementing a comprehensive Healthy Community Model focused on primary and specialty care access, preventive and chronic care management, care coordination and management, provider collaboration, community engagement, and a connected digital and technological infrastructure that will allow participating organizations to more easily share patient data and coordinate care. Already in our first full year of operation, we have made substantial progress in beginning to implement in these areas, including allocation of funds to help participating organizations hire new physicians in priority areas of primary care and obstetrics/gynecology, expansion of community health worker programs to enhance care coordination, and new funding to help community based organizations address unmet social needs. Through our efforts, we are enhancing the capacity of individual organizations, strengthening ties between them, and ultimately supporting the entire health system of the South Side.

We know that 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. 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 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 black ink that reads "Kimberly Hobson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Kimberly Hobson
CEO

South Side Healthy Community Organization