



RECEIVED

MAY 17 2023

**HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

May 9, 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 CEO of Friend Health, 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.

Friend Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center with 6 locations on the South Side of Chicago. Friend Health provides high quality, affordable primary care, and behavioral health services to medically underserved communities on the South Side, regardless of their insurance or financial status.

We are also members of the South Side Healthy Community Organization, a coalition of 13 health care organizations that care for patients on the South Side of Chicago. 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.

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,

Verneda Bachus

[Verneda Bachus \(May 9, 2023 15:33 CDT\)](#)

Verneda Bachus, DHA, MBA
Chief Executive Officer