

September 2, 2025

Debra Savage, Chair
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: NorthPointe Neighborhood Hospital (Project No. 24-018)

Dear Ms. Savage:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the proposed NorthPointe Neighborhood Hospital. As the longtime and now former Executive Director of the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), I have spent more than two decades working with small hospitals across Illinois to ensure that patients receive high-quality and timely care close to home. NorthPointe Neighborhood Hospital will be a small-format hospital with similar challenges and opportunities. Prior to ICAHN, I served as a vice president at Perry Memorial Hospital, a rural Illinois hospital, and as its director of nursing for more than ten years. My qualifications are more fully described in my resume which I've attached. Based on my experience, I am confident that this model can provide safe, high-quality hospital and emergency services and will expand much-needed access to care for the Stateline community.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand how small hospitals succeed in meeting urgent community needs when they follow evidence-based nursing standards, build strong clinical teams, and establish reliable networks for timely patient transfers. These hospitals stabilize and treat the vast majority of patients who arrive in their emergency rooms—with most discharged directly home—while safely transferring patients who need a higher level of specialty care. NorthPointe has planned to follow these same well-established practices, which gives me confidence in its ability to deliver excellent care from day one.

The success of a small hospital depends heavily on staffing models, especially nursing coverage. NorthPointe will adhere to rigorous nurse-to-patient staffing standards modeled on Joint Commission-recognized best practices ensuring patients are cared for by well-trained and appropriately allocated nursing staff. The project also draws strength from its partnerships with nursing schools and health professions training programs, which will expand opportunities for clinical learning while supporting the local workforce. These strategies mirror practices I've seen used successfully by community and critical access hospitals across Illinois.

The success of a small hospital depends heavily on staffing models that prioritize patient-centered care, with a strong emphasis on the nurse-patient relationship and building trust within the healthcare team. At NorthPointe, they will implement rigorous nurse staffing requirements that will meet the Nurse Staffing Improvement Act, 102-064. In addition, NorthPointe will adopt best practices recognized by the Joint Commission to cultivate a culture of continuous quality improvement. These standards ensure that patients receive care from well-trained and appropriately

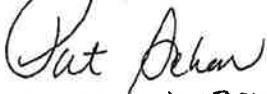
allocated nursing staff. Additionally, the project will benefit from strategic partnerships with nursing schools and health professions training programs, expanding opportunities for clinical education while strengthening the local healthcare workforce. These strategies reflect successful approaches used by community and critical access hospitals throughout Illinois.

Relative to the scope of nursing care that NorthPointe's inpatient unit will provide, nurses will consistently provide a core menu of essential services that every patient receives, with the level of intensity expanded or reduced based on the patient's acuity. Acute hospital, nursing care standards begin with an initial and ongoing assessments (vital signs, pain, neurological status, skin integrity, and overall condition), planning and coordinating care with the broader healthcare team, administering and monitoring medications and treatments, managing IV therapy, wounds, catheters, drains, and respiratory or blood-glucose interventions, monitoring safety and preventing complications such as falls or pressure injuries, supporting nutrition, hydration, mobility, and personal care, educating patients and families about care needs and discharge planning, and not limited to responding rapidly to changes in condition. This is a reliable set of nursing services, and I'm confident that this scope will be available, especially given the planned hospital's partnership with a nearby hospital.

Just as important is NorthPointe's plan for care coordination and transfers. By extending existing patient transfer agreements and adhering to EMS protocols, Illinois Department of Public Health Emergency Department patient care and transfer preparation, and federal EMTALA requirements, NorthPointe will ensure patients needing immediate higher-level care are rapidly stabilized and accepted at an appropriate facility. The inclusion of a helipad demonstrates readiness for transport to regional tertiary centers when needed. This thoughtful planning reflects the operational principles that have long made small hospitals safe and effective anchors in their communities.

In summary, NorthPointe Neighborhood Hospital's proposal reflects the best of what small hospital models can provide: timely access to care, strong nursing support, effective coordination with larger systems, and a mission-driven focus on community health. The Stateline community will benefit greatly from the addition of this hospital, and I urge the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pat Schou".

Pat Schou, RN, BSN, MS, FACHE