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UNIVERSITY

Ms. Debra Savage, Chair
IL Health Facilities & Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761
September 9, 2024

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**HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

Dear Chair Savage:

I am writing in support of HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital's (SEO) Certificate of Need (CON) application to the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to invest over \$50 million in new clinical infrastructure at their current facility located in O'Fallon, Illinois. More specifically, SEO plans to construct a 70,000 square foot medical office building which will contain a surgery center.

As a Professor Emeritus of Nursing at McKendree University, I collaborate with and am engaged with all HSHS Southern Illinois hospitals and their nursing workforce. As a nurse leader and educator, I am committed to expanding and fostering the development of all nursing professionals. Most recently, I secured Senate appropriation funding sponsored by Senator Durbin that provided a minimum of twenty HSHS nurses to acquire a master's degree in nursing at no cost to them. Partnerships such as this are vital in supporting the overall health and wellbeing of people who reside in southern Illinois and the Metro East area. The healthcare ecosystem in southern Illinois will benefit from HSHS' expansion, and I look forward to continued partnerships with HSHS hospitals, including St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon. Together, we must commit to growing a robust and resilient healthcare workforce.

Beyond my role with McKendree University, I currently serve as Chair of the HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital - Breese (SJB) Board of Directors and even served as a rural Illinois hospital CEO in the past. In carrying out my duties as Board chairperson and as a past healthcare executive, I understand the need for consistently available tertiary care in supporting more rural facilities such as SJB. Without SEO's ability to care for patients of higher acuity, rural hospitals and patients will suffer. This proposed expansion supports rural healthcare in Illinois and helps meet the healthcare needs of its downstate residents.

Thank you for this opportunity to support this application.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Richelle Renegarbe

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