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May 22, 2025

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board

525 W. Jefferson Street, Second Floor
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To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Ottawa City Council, I would like to provide an update on the ongoing discussions and developments regarding OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, the community, and the City of Ottawa.

Meeting with OSF on May 9, 2025

On May 9, 2025, representatives from OSF met with Commissioner Tom Ganiere, Police Chief Michael Cheatham, and Fire Chief Brian Bressner. Discussions focused on bypass and diversion policies associated with OSF's two-campus model under one license. OSF clarified that any diversion of emergency services would require notification to the Illinois Department of Public Health and provided the city with their official policy and procedure on this process.

A primary concern expressed was the potential for automatic diversion of emergency services from the Ottawa campus to the Peru campus when the former is at capacity. OSF confirmed that such diversion would only occur if it met state criteria. Additionally, ambulance delays due to Emergency Room overcrowding were addressed, with OSF stating their goal is to keep wait times under five minutes during such incidents.

We also explored options to improve coordination between OSF Emergency Department and local emergency services, particularly in scenarios where Ottawa Fire Department is responding and beds may need to be opened.

Chief Cheatham raised operational concerns including:

- After-care transportation for discharged patients to reduce reliance on Ottawa police resources
- Incorrect 9-1-1 calls resulting from patients dialing out using “9-1-1-...” and the challenges this creates for dispatchers

Following the meeting, Chief Cheatham reached out to OSF Director of Security Rick Glover to schedule a follow-up meeting. Mr. Glover has indicated he will reach out to confirm a time, but as of today, a meeting has not been scheduled.

Community Stakeholder Meeting on May 20, 2025

On May 20, OSF hosted the first of five planned meetings with Ottawa Mayor Robert Hasty, Commissioners Tom Ganiere and Wayne Eichelkraut, Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce Director Jay McCracken, and members of Citizens for Health Care in Ottawa (CHO): Colleen Burns, Ron Henson, and Dr. Brian Rosborough, MD. Representing OSF were Board Member and system CEO Bob Sehring, Karen Brodbeck, Dawn Trompeter, AJ Querciagrossa, Heather Bomstad, Dr. Leonardo Lopez, and advisory board members George Shanley and Steven Gonzalo.

The meeting began with city officials voicing concerns over a lack of communication from OSF to both the public and its own staff. There was notable frustration that recent hospital ratings had been publicized by OSF without adequately recognizing the efforts of employees at the Ottawa campus. OSF responded that employee communications have been extensive, but acknowledged they cannot ensure all employees are receiving or retaining the information.

There was also a discussion regarding shared responsibilities for public communication. While the City has tried to disseminate available information, it emphasized that the specifics of service changes must come directly from OSF. OSF cited the challenge of delivering clear messages while many decisions remain in flux.

The City asked whether OSF was formally committed to the 20-bed “Enhanced Plan” or still considering the original proposal of only 12 medical/surgical beds. OSF clarified that no commitment has been made, and the purpose of the 12-month extension of the Certificate of Need (CON) is to determine community needs more precisely. OSF was adamant however, that they didn’t feel we were ever negotiating and that they did not foresee any plan expanding beyond an “enhanced plan.” It was asked why OSF had not elected to amend the CON, when asking for an extension, to include the “enhanced plan.” A CHO member pointed out that this was also asked by an IHFSR Board Member at the March hearing. OSF’s response was that there was no need to do so since the twelve-month extension would dictate what the need would be.

Inpatient census data was also reviewed, although it did not include the requested ZIP-code-level information. OSF cautioned against heavy reliance on historical data due to anomalies caused by a national flu epidemic. Current figures show an average daily census of 34 patients in Ottawa (both in 2024 and 2025 YTD), while Peru’s census has doubled during the same time period as new services are implemented.

OSF reaffirmed its intent to construct a new facility rather than continue with the current Ottawa campus. It was further clarified that OB and ICU services will be centralized in Peru, including any future ICU bed expansions. Additional services moving to Peru include histology/microbiology labs and interventional radiology. However, OSF is also making efforts to improve local access in Ottawa by recruiting a gastroenterologist, enhancing orthopedic services, and initiating a pilot program benefiting sexual abuse survivors.

The meeting also confirmed that surgeries have commenced at the Peru campus, ICU construction is on schedule, and kitchen renovations are either complete or nearing completion.

The next stakeholder meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2025, following the Public Hearing on June 10, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Hasty
Mayor, City of Ottawa