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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD



March 27, 2025

Mr. John Kniery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Dear Mr. Kniery:

The Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SIRP&DC) is pleased to offer our strong support for the proposed expansion of mental health in-patient beds and services at Harrisburg Medical Center. This initiative is essential for enhancing mental health care accessibility and quality within our region, and it aligns with our mission to foster sustainable economic and community development.

Since its establishment in 1968, SIRP&DC has been dedicated to serving the counties of Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope, and Saline. As an Economic Development District designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, our primary focus is the preparation and implementation of the District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This strategy provides a thorough analysis of our region's strengths and weaknesses, outlining the goals and objectives necessary for sustainable development.

The expansion of mental health services at Harrisburg Medical Center will significantly contribute to the economic development of our region. By increasing the availability of in-patient beds, we can ensure that individuals receive timely and effective treatment within their own communities. This will reduce the need for patients to travel far from their families and support systems, thereby improving patient care and overall community well-being. Additionally, the project will help prevent the escalation of mental health issues and reduce unnecessary emergency room visits.

Moreover, the successful completion of this project will stimulate economic growth by creating high-wage employment opportunities within the healthcare sector. This aligns with SIRP&DC's priority goal of job creation and stimulating private sector investment. The enhanced collaboration between Harrisburg Medical Center and local organizations, including SIRP&DC, will foster a more resilient and supportive environment for all residents.

SIRP&DC has a long history of providing essential services to our region, acting as a center for district statistics and project information, and serving as a liaison with state and federal agencies. Our community-represented board and the CEDS Committee, composed of private stakeholders, provide local input into the development and maintenance of our comprehensive strategy. This collaborative approach ensures that our initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of our region.

The expansion of mental health in-patient beds and services at Harrisburg Medical Center will have far-reaching benefits, including destigmatizing mental health treatment and encouraging more individuals to seek help. The ripple effects of improved mental health services will be felt across all sectors of our community, from schools and workplaces to community organizations and healthcare providers.

We respectfully urge the State of Illinois to approve the Certificate of Need application for this critical expansion project. The positive impact on mental health care accessibility, quality, and outcomes in Southeastern Illinois cannot be overstated. SIRP&DC is committed to supporting this project every step of the way, recognizing its importance for the sustainable development and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alene Carr".

Alene Carr, Executive Director
SIRP&DC
230 West Poplar Street
Harrisburg, IL 62946
618-252-7463