

Georgia Costello, Ph.D.
Belleville, Illinois

December 20, 2024

Via Personal Delivery

Ms. Debra Savage, Chairwoman
Illinois Health Facilities & Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
REVIEW BOARD

Re: CON Application of HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital /
Capital Improvements to Meet Existing Patient Demand

Dear Chairwoman Savage,

As a lifelong resident of the community, I will always support opportunities to lift up my Metro East region. With my long experience in education (including past service as president of Southwestern Illinois College) and volunteer community service (including sitting on the board of HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital), I passionately support projects that benefit the educational and health care needs of our residents. The CON application of SEO referenced above, seeking authority to make needed capital improvements at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon ("SEO"), is one such opportunity for our region.

SEO seeks authority to invest \$66 million to meet existing patient demand and make the hospital more space-efficient. These capital improvements are wholly justified by the patient volume that SEO presently serves, and do not rely on patient volume from any other Illinois health care facility.

The hospital's existing 112-bed medical/surgical unit has been utilized at or above 90% every year since 2019, compared to the state's target utilization of 85%. The last two years have averaged over 100% utilization. This extremely high utilization creates back-up in the emergency department – which itself has repeatedly been at “peak census” – and patients are regularly boarded in the ED awaiting inpatient beds to become available. This also presents serious challenges for the hospital in dealing with periodic surges in local patient care needs and accommodating the compounded annual growth rate of over 5.4% in patient days.

Enhanced emergency department capabilities for local patients will also be made available through your approval of this CON, including a new CT scanner and X-Ray machine.

The Metro East region would welcome the economic and employment benefits provided by your approval of this \$66 million capital improvement by SEO – which next year celebrates its 150th anniversary of providing healthcare in our region. Through approval of this investment, you can help ensure that SEO will remain a vital part of our local healthcare system for coming generations. I respectfully ask that you give this CON application your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Georgia Costello

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