

July 19, 2025

Ms. Debra Savage

Chairwoman

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board

525 W. Jefferson Street

Springfield, IL 62761

My name is Eric Anderson. I'm retired after a 39-year career first managing a local farm cooperative in Triumph Illinois, then the final 12 years as General Manager/CEO of Northern Partners Cooperative in Mendota. I was on the Board of Directors for Mendota Community Hospital, then OSF St. Paul from 2004 – 2014.

Shortly after joining the Board, Mendota Community Hospital (MCH) was faced with the need to expand and update certain areas of our 50-year-old facility. We were also faced challenges with an O.B. department that was underutilized, difficult to staff and unprofitable. We made decisions to cease the operation of the O.B. unit and to move on from our old facility and build a new, state of the art facility. Difficult as those decisions were at the time, they both proved to be beneficial. It appears these decisions may be very similar to those that the Ottawa community is faced with today.

Soon after moving operations to our new facility, the health care industry began to see rapid change to business models. In order to maintain economies of scale, recruit and retain the best talent as well as ensure financially viable health care coverage into the future, our Board chose to partner with O.S.F. This was a way to ensure our community had solid, dependable health care coverage far into the future. This decision allowed us to successfully address those issues and it plugged our community into a larger local network where patients could access a wide variety of specialists within a local network developed by O.S.F. in the Illinois Valley area.

Today, O.S.F. has developed a thoughtful, forward thinking comprehensive model to provide the best possible care for mothers and babies in the entire Illinois Valley without inefficient duplication of services. By servicing Ottawa, Streator, LaSalle, Peru, Ogelsby, Spring Valley, Princeton and Mendota from one location, there would be enough volume to provide high quality, innovative and expanded care a short distance from a large number of communities in the Illinois Valley. What a blessing for families in this area to be able to utilize one network to handle all of their health care needs for years to come as opposed to the challenges of navigating multiple hospitals for various care.

I respectfully ask the Board to approve this key step in the long-term commitment O.S.F. is making to our communities. This benefits all of the communities I mentioned above, not just a single community. The impact of this forward-thinking decision would provide innovative solutions for maternal and child health in this region for many years. It deserves your full support.

O.S.F. is making a similar decision to consolidate I.C.U. services in Peru. Consolidating this service into one central location reflects a forward-thinking, long-term strategy to provide a high level of care efficiently for an entire region. This strategy would support the facilities and infrastructure to provide a higher level of care for more complex patients locally without the need to frequently transfer them out of the region. This regional model would also aid in recruiting and retaining the highest quality health care professionals.

Patients in each of our local communities still access E.R. services, diagnostics, primary care as well as follow up care right in their own community.

Rural healthcare is facing unprecedented challenges. At a time when many rural facilities are closing or paring services they can offer, O.S.F. is positioning our region for long term sustainability by reducing duplication, optimizing staffing and focusing resources where they will provide the biggest benefits for the most patients.

I once again respectfully ask the Board to support this crucial step of allowing O.S.F. to regionalize I.C.U. services by discontinuing those services in Ottawa and centralizing them in LaSalle-Peru. This is a forward-thinking decision that will be a long-term benefit for all communities in our region.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric G. Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric G. Anderson