

July 21, 2025

Ms. Debra Savage
Chairwoman
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson Street
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: CON Project 25-013
Discontinuation of ICU and Obstetrics services
OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center - Ottawa

Dear Chairwoman Savage:

I write in support of the project to discontinue ICU and Obstetrics services at OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center - Ottawa. The discontinuations are part of the commitment made by OSF to close these services in Ottawa upon their relocation to OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center - Peru. The opening of the services in Peru will occur in August.

As an Emergency Department physician who has practiced over 28 years, starting in a level One Trauma Center but for the last 15 years primarily in the rural setting I have seen more changes in our delivery of health care than I ever thought possible. Although many changes have resulted in better care for our patients the most impactful change has been the loss of resources at these rural sites.

The decrease in OB services is well documented with Illinois hospitals closing 25% of OB programs in the last 10 years and the creation of OB deserts. But equally impactful is the lack of ICU beds at smaller hospitals. This is due in part to the change in medical education as well as increasing complexity care requiring consistent exposure to ensure competency. This has resulted in the inability to recruit nurses and physicians who are willing to work at rural sites.

OSF closing the ICU and OB services in Ottawa will not result in less health care for the region but of greater opportunity to expand the level and quality of care to a larger footprint. Having an 8 bed ICU in Peru will allow recruitment and hiring of dedicated ICU physicians and nurses. There is also the downstream effect on other specialties knowing they have the support of 24/7 ICU staff allowing more non-ICU patients to stay locally.

The impact of having more specialty care on the local residents is less travel to tertiary centers in Peoria, Rockford and Chicago which saves both time and money and alleviates stress during an incredibly trying time for patients and family.

I urge the members of the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve the project for discontinuations.

Sincerely,



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C: Karen Brodbeck, Director of Public Relations, OSF HealthCare
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