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Ms Debra Savage, Chairwoman

Members of the Illinois Health Facilities Services Review Board

525 W. Jefferson St, 2nd Floor

Springfield, Illinois 62761

RE: Project 25-013 Discontinuation of ICU and OB Services, OSF St Elizabeth Medical Center – Ottawa

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Board Members:

I submit this letter in opposition to OSF's proposed plan to discontinue ICU and OB services in Ottawa. I think it important to step back and look at the bigger picture of why there is such strong community opposition to this project.

- 1) OSF did not conduct a thorough needs assessment, key stakeholder analysis, or risk impact analysis prior to launching this project as evidenced by the many significant issues that have surfaced, the number of unanswered questions that still remain after a year-and-a-half, the CON deferrals, and the modifications OSF is presently seeking. The fact that community leadership, EMT's, first responders, and other local community and business officials were blindsided and never consulted prior to announcing and launching this project, further demonstrates OSF's lack of concern and understanding about how this project will impact the citizens of Eastern LaSalle County. For this reason alone, the modification should be denied

and the entire CON project should be re-evaluated and resubmitted after appropriate analysis is conducted with input from key stakeholders.

- 2) OSF's plan is essentially robbing Peter (Ottawa) to pay Paul (Peru). For over 100 years, until 2023, the cities of Spring Valley and Peru each operated full in-patient facilities located just 4 miles from each other! They were serving many of the same patient population. For 2 hospitals to operate and survive so closely together begs the question, and investigation, into how they co-existed for so long. One could logically deduce that even with the ever-changing healthcare landscape over the past 100 years, the approximately 28,000 people in the cities of Peru, Spring Valley, LaSalle, Oglesby did adequately support one facility. Likewise, the approximately 40,000 people in the Ottawa and Eastern LaSalle County region demonstrated they have successfully supported their own fully functioning facility.
- 3) The Ottawa Hospital has been, and continues to be, a well-managed, profitable, fiscally responsible, award-winning facility serving the needs of Eastern LaSalle County. OSF has not been transparent, nor forthcoming, with their project plans and has failed to provide any solid justification to the citizens for dismantling 115 years of community success. When pressed, OSF has only provided occasional vague, general statements about "changes in rural healthcare" and the need to "consolidate resources". These nonspecific, imprecise comments do not come close to justifying why a person may now experience 2 different transfers for ICU beds, who is paying for the extra transfers, what happens when a person is too ill to be transferred and there are no ICU beds available, etc.

It is my opinion that OSF's regional healthcare realignment is ill-conceived, short-sighted, and is not a practical, patient-centered plan. I urge you to deny the modification request.

Sincerely,



Julie A. Polancic