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Illinois Health Facilities and Service Review Board
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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICE REVIEW BOARD

SUBJECT: Written Comment for Proposed Project #25-031, Oak Hill Senior Living Rehabilitation Center, 523 Hamacher Street, Waterloo, Illinois.

Illinois Health Facilities and Service Review Board:

As a Registered Nurse, tax payer, lifelong resident of Monroe County, IL and former employee of Oak Hill. I have many concerns with the proposed 5 year lease and potential sale of Oak Hill to Accolade Ventures LLC, Accolade Healthcare. With the lack of transparency and quick decision from the County Board, I strongly oppose this proposed change of ownership.

Over the years I have had many loved ones who have called Oak Hill home and they have received exceptional care. 24 years of my 37 year nursing career was at Oak Hill, the last 6 years of my tenure I was the Director of Nursing. I worked with some of the most dedicated and caring staff, I witnessed many going above and beyond their responsibilities to make the residents stay at Oak Hill feel like home.

Monroe County has an extensive and rich history of providing care for the poor and destitute in the community since 1858. Over the years the nursing home has evolved into a state of the art health care nursing home with a reputation of providing exceptional care and providing stable jobs with excellent benefits for members of the community which will go away once leased. The nursing home has a strong history of support from the community of Waterloo and Monroe County as witnessed when they voted to build a new nursing home in 2006.

As a nurse there is concern the quality of care will decline due to Oak Hill being a not for profit nursing home and is being leased and potentially sold to a for profit Accolade Ventures LLC, Accolade Healthcare company. Oak Hill at this time is a 4 star facility per Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Five-Star Quality Rating System. Accolade Ventures LLC, Accolade Healthcare operates 6 nursing homes in central Illinois and the combined percentage of star rating for those 6 nursing homes is 2.3 stars. Multiple studies have shown that nursing homes with lower star ratings, especially those with 1 or 2 stars are associated with poor resident outcomes and significant quality of care issues. These lower ratings often correlate with higher rates of hospitalizations, increased mortality, and worse performance during disease out breaks and greater deficiencies during inspections. Staffing is another concern with for profit companies; Oak Hill currently has a higher proportion of Registered Nurses, which correlates with better quality of care. Accolade Ventures, LLC, Accolade Healthcare 6 nursing homes they currently operate have a combined percentage of a 1.5 star rating for staffing per CMS 5 Star Quality Rating System; Oak Hill currently has a 4 star rating for staffing. If Monroe County leases the nursing home to a for profit company they will lose control of the quality of care provided to the seniors in the community. Being in a rural area the seniors have few options where to receive care once they need it, Oak Hill has always been recommended by hospitals in MO and IL as the place for quality care post hospitalization.

Financially Oak Hill has done well when managed efficiently, it has made enough to pay off the building built in 2006 and built and paid for a multimillion addition completed in 2017. In the Jan 2019 county board minutes it was reported Oak Hill ended 2018 with 1,444,958 net profits. It was reported in the local paper (Republic Times) on 9/17/2025 Oak Hill has 1 million in a CD for a new roof and 1 million in savings account. On the other hand Accolade Ventures LLC, Accolade Healthcare has struggled per interviews by its owners. In the Peoria Journal Star, May 25, 2024 edition the owners of Accolade Venture LLC, Accolade Healthcare were interviewed and they stated their company has been in the red. The owner was quoted "Our cash flow is – we're hemorrhaging and it's dire" per Capitol News Illinois. Owners stated "I don't see us growing anytime soon and I don't know if we'll be at the same level in a year from now at the rate that we're at right now." Accolade said it's scary to look around their industry and see operators they admired having to close their facilities. They told Capital News Illinois they worry about the possibility of facing that outcome themselves. Where does this leave Oak Hill if they fail to effectively operate the nursing home during the 5 year lease agreement? Does it leave Oak Hill with a ruined reputation, a building that has been left go, unfilled beds, loss of trust from the community that has supported the nursing home the last 75 years and loss of long term dedicated local staff?

I am opposed to this proposition to lease and or sell Oak Hill. The Monroe County Board of Commissioners has not allowed the community of tax payers to be involved, by not giving us the complete picture. I request the board to take into consideration this has been a County Nursing Home for 75 years. The Monroe County Commissioners have not always had the expertise in healthcare to manage Oak Hill but former County Boards have worked diligently to provide other healthcare management options for its success in the past without leasing or selling the facility. Many former employees and lifelong residents of Monroe County have been involved with Oak Hill for many years and know its imperative to keep it county owned. Oak Hill has dedicated employees, provides exceptional quality of care, has a reputation in the healthcare industry as providing exceptional care and was and can be financially self-sufficient when managed correctly. The County Board of Commissioners needs to reconsider the ramifications of proceeding with their decision to lease Oak Hill. A 5 year lease without any county oversight except for quarterly financial reports could hide care issues that would be hard to remedy if the lease fails and would put the president's health in jeopardy and care choices for the taxpayers of Monroe County will be limited. There are 15 nursing homes surrounding Waterloo within a 16 mile radius. Of those choices there are 2 – 5star nursing homes located in MO. 12-15 miles from Waterloo, 1 – 4star nursing home which is Oak Hill, 2- 3star nursing homes in MO. 14-15 miles from Waterloo, 2- 2star nursing homes 1 in MO. & 1 in IL. 15 miles from Waterloo & 8 – 1star nursing homes in IL. 8-16 miles from Waterloo. If Oak Hill quality of care declines it would be a hardship on our senior population to have to travel up to 16 miles to visit their loved ones if they have to choose a nursing home with better quality of care. Oak Hill has taken care of Monroe County residents no matter their payer source, if some of our seniors cannot afford nursing home care they have a right to have quality care close to home, will Accolade give those seniors the same care and grace, there management of other nursing homes states otherwise! It is imperative the county continues to own Oak Hill to serve the many seniors in our community; they deserve the best quality of care that has been provided the last 75 years!

Respectfully,



Zoe Weakly, R.N.