

October 29, 2025

Mike Constantino, Supervisor
Project Review Section Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street (2nd Floor)
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Re: Oak Hill Senior Living and Rehabilitation Center, Waterloo, IL - Project #25-031

Dear Mr. Constantino,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed lease of the county-owned Oak Hill Senior Living & Rehabilitation Center to Accolade Healthcare. The record shows that Monroe County taxpayers have continued to invest heavily in maintaining and improving this public facility — evidence that Oak Hill is not an abandoned burden, but a community asset built, paid for, and cared for by its residents.

There is clear evidence that the county has already funded and approved substantial improvements at Oak Hill:

- In recent years, Monroe County advertised and paid for capital work including a roof replacement and parking lot construction and surfacing at Oak Hill.
- County bond records show payments on the original Oak Hill construction bonds, with the final payoff announced in January 2025 — meaning the facility itself is now **debt-free** and fully owned by the citizens of Monroe County.
- Public reports also note planned or completed repairs to sidewalks, entrance areas, and other building improvements at taxpayer expense.
- These projects were publicly bid and executed under county oversight, affirming that Oak Hill remains a maintained and functional county property, not a neglected liability.

It is inconsistent and fiscally irresponsible to transfer control of a county-funded, debt-free facility to a private operator just as local taxpayers have finished paying for its construction and improvements. The very existence of these county-paid projects proves ongoing commitment and value. Monroe County has not “abandoned” Oak Hill — it has **continued to invest** in it.

The proposed lease also raises serious concerns:

- It would surrender public ownership and accountability for a facility that has served Monroe County families for generations.
- Oak Hill was built, maintained, and improved using **public funds** and community trust — not private capital. Handing it over to a for-profit entity severs that public trust and leaves citizens with no recourse if care standards, staffing, or accessibility decline.

- The Board's own recent public hearings have demonstrated strong community opposition and serious unanswered questions about long-term costs, employee protections, and public oversight under a private lease.

Rather than leasing out a debt-free public facility, the County should pursue operational reforms, partnerships, or management assistance that preserve **public ownership and transparency**. Monroe County residents have already invested their tax dollars into Oak Hill's upkeep, infrastructure, and bond payments. We deserve continued public benefit and control — not privatization.

For all these reasons, I urge the State to **reject any lease or transfer of Oak Hill to Accolade Healthcare or any private operator**. Oak Hill belongs to the people of Monroe County, and it should stay that way.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Muertz