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Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2025 4:45 PM

To: DPH.HFSRB <DPH.HFSRB@Illinois.gov>

Subject: [External] Opposition to Proposed Closure of Labor & Delivery Unit at Alexian Brothers Medical Center

Dear Members of the Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board,

My name is Nina, and I am a nurse in the labor and delivery unit at Alexian Brothers Medical Center (ABMC) in Elk Grove Village.

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed closure of our maternity unit and the consolidation of services at Saint Alexius Medical Center (SAMC) in Hoffman Estates.

Closure of the ABMC maternity unit will significantly impact community access to quality care. ABMC's obstetrics unit serves a diverse and vulnerable patient population in the Northwest Suburbs. Many of our patients have established care with our providers, however there are others who present to us because we are the closest hospital, or present to us having received no prenatal care because they did not have the resources available to receive care.

The plan to defer non-emergency cases to SAMC and continue emergency deliveries at ABMC raises significant concerns of safety. Our emergency department is not equipped or trained for high-risk deliveries, and the additional 20 minute drive to SAMC could jeopardize patient outcomes in critical situations. Recently, our staff identified an obstetric emergency and delivered the baby within six minutes. ER staff are not trained in obstetric emergencies to the same extent as labor and delivery nurses and may not recognize or respond to such emergencies as quickly. This delay in recognition could lead to adverse outcomes for both mothers and newborns.

SAMC is frequently on bypass, delaying scheduled cases. Their current capacity is insufficient to handle the additional increase in deliveries. In May and June of 2025, ABMC had over 130 deliveries each month, with instances where all our labor AND triage rooms were full. This includes during our non-"busy season." It will be difficult to accommodate not just our patients, but also our staff at SAMC. SAMC has offered ABMC staff to tour the SAMC unit, and our staff have noted the limited workspace for charting during these unit tours.

Ascension has kept staff in the dark about the consolidation. The closure of ABMC's maternity unit was announced to staff because of the raised concerns about our critical staffing on nights. Over the past year, six night shift labor and delivery nurses have left, and their positions have not been replaced. This leaves four labor and delivery nurses permanently staffed on nights. Night staff met with management to voice their concerns and request safe staffing, to which management had stated that ABMC was "unproductive" in deliveries, and had defined productivity as a minimum of four deliveries within a 24-hour period. Yet as stated above, in May and June 2025, ABMC had 132 and 133 deliveries respectively. Despite presenting these numbers, management has stated they are unable to hire additional night shift nurses at this time. This solidified to staff that the rumors of ABMC maternity unit closure were true. It was only after demand for the truth from staff that management had stated they were in the beginning stages of a consolidation.

Not only has there been a lack of transparency with nurses during this process, our providers have also been left in the dark. OB-GYN physicians and neonatologists were not formally notified of the planned closure. Providers learned of the closure from nurses who attended separate meetings with management which providers were unaware of. Our OB-GYNs have stated they will not continue gynecology services in a hospital without labor and delivery services, which will leave no OB providers onsite. This means emergent deliveries will fall solely to ER physicians, who are not seasoned in OB emergencies. In a recent town hall meeting held in Elk Grove Village with both staff *and* residents present, Dr. David Bordo, a previous ER doctor and current CMO of ABMC, had stated "I don't want to deliver a baby, but I will." To which a resident stated they did not want their grandchild delivered by a physician who did not want to deliver a newborn.

Ascension continues to operate as a nonprofit health system, however its executives receive extraordinary compensation. Ascension's CEO Joseph Impicciche earned over \$13 million in one recent year, while maternity care is labeled "non-productive." The system's claim that this unit is "unprofitable" is contradicted by its ability to retain high executive pay and accumulate reserves. Reducing services that disproportionately affect mothers and underserved populations violates Ascension's mission of a nonprofit hospital.

The proposed closure of the labor and delivery unit at ABMC is not the result of a thoughtful strategy to improve care. It shows the dismissal of staff concerns and a refusal to invest in front-line healthcare. The closure will put families, mothers, and newborns at risk, especially during emergencies that require immediate intervention.

I respectfully urge the Board to deny Ascension's application to discontinue labor and delivery services at ABMC, or at a minimum, require SAMC to complete careful expansion of its maternity ward to allow for the extra influx of both patient and staff prior to the consolidation. This will not only allow patients to be provided education on the move, but will also allow time for ER staff at ABMC to be trained by L&D staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nina, RN, RNC-OB