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Illinois Health Facilities Services and Review Board

Attn: John P. Kniery, Administrator

525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor

Springfield, IL 62761

Re: Opposition to Letter of Support from Senator Seth Lewis Regarding Ascension Alexian Brothers Transition

Dear Mr. Kniery,

I am writing to express my opposition to the recent letter of support submitted by Senator Seth Lewis regarding the transition of inpatient obstetric services from Ascension Alexian Brothers to Ascension St. Alexius.

While I respect Senator Lewis's role as an elected official, it is important to note that his district is not directly impacted by this decision, and he holds no professional authority in the field of obstetrics. His endorsement therefore should not carry significant weight in evaluating the impact of this proposal on the affected communities and families who rely on these services.

Senator Lewis referenced Ascension's "transparency" in communications surrounding this transition. However, this characterization overlooks the fact that much of Ascension's engagement with the community came only after staff protests and public outcry over the decision. The forums, hearings, and outreach efforts that followed were largely reactive, a form of damage control rather than proactive transparency.

Furthermore, Senator Lewis cited that nearly 90 percent of nursing staff would be retained through this transition. This claim is no longer accurate. As of October 27, 2025, that figure has dropped to approximately 81 percent (64 percent labor and delivery), and the number continues to decline as more skilled healthcare workers seek employment outside of Ascension. This attrition reflects deep concerns among staff about patient safety, continuity of care, and the long-term sustainability of this plan.

It is also misleading to frame this transition as the creation of a so-called "Center of Excellence." There is no recognized standard or accreditation defining such a designation in this context. (1) Instead, this label serves primarily as a marketing tool to justify and obscure a series of poor financial decisions made across Ascension's Illinois market. Using this type of terminology to mask the loss of essential, accessible obstetric care does not serve the best interests of the patients or the community.

The proposed transition will have significant and detrimental effects on women's healthcare access in our community. Frontline healthcare workers—those most familiar with the needs of

patients—have consistently warned of the negative consequences this move will have on maternal and neonatal outcomes. Their concerns must be given greater consideration than the endorsement of an official who is neither geographically nor professionally connected to the issue.

For these reasons, I urge the Board to weigh the testimony of impacted staff, patients, and local residents above external political endorsements and to reject the proposed transition.

Thank you for your attention and for your commitment to protecting the healthcare needs of Illinois families.

Sincerely,
Kaylyn Krolicki, RN, BSN
Alexian Brothers Medical Center
Labor and Delivery

Reference

Li, J., Burson, R. C., Clapp, J. T., & Fleisher, L. A. (2020). Centers of excellence: Are there standards? *Healthcare: The Journal of Delivery Science and Innovation*, 8(1), 100388.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hjdsi.2019.100388>