



INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS • AFL-CIO

LOCAL 399

March 25, 2025

Chairwoman Debra Savage
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Chairwoman Savage:

IUOE Local 399 and the undersigned members of the Illinois General Assembly write in opposition to Advocate Health Care's Certificate of Need application seeking approval of a \$99 million expansion of its cancer treatment facility at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge (project # 26-002).

The Lutheran General expansion comes while Advocate is engaged in an ongoing labor dispute with skilled maintenance workers represented by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 399 at multiple Chicagoland facilities. These workers, who are responsible for critical building systems, infection control infrastructure, life-safety equipment, and more, lawfully exercised their right to form a union. Rather than engaging in good-faith bargaining, Advocate has subjected workers to retaliation, intimidation, and repeated violations of federal labor law.

Because skilled maintenance workers are essential to safe hospital operations, this instability has direct implications for patient care. These workers ensure that ventilation systems maintain proper pressurization in operating rooms and isolation areas, that humidity and temperature controls protect vulnerable oncology patients, that plumbing systems function safely, and that backup power systems are ready during emergencies. In a cancer care setting (where many patients are immunocompromised) proper air filtration, moisture control, and building envelope integrity are critical.

We have received reports from maintenance staff across Advocate facilities of moisture issues, air pressurization concerns, heating and cooling failures, plumbing backups, and deferred infrastructure repairs. Workers have raised these issues internally and provided recommendations for corrective action, only to see those recommendations delayed or disregarded. Advocate has not demonstrated that it can stabilize and retain the skilled workforce necessary to operate and maintain its existing facilities – let alone an expanded cancer center.

At the same time, Advocate is experiencing high turnover among skilled maintenance personnel. Workers report unfair and unpredictable scheduling, wages well below industry standards, and working conditions that lead to burnout and attrition. As a result, Advocate is losing experienced engineers left and right. Expanding physical capacity without first resolving workforce instability raises serious concerns about long-term reliability, infection control, and patient safety.

The Board's mandate includes evaluating not only service need and financial feasibility, but also whether a project will support safe, effective delivery of care. Local 399 has spoken with legislators, state agencies, and community members who are deeply concerned about Advocate's ongoing labor dispute, and the effect it may have on patient care.

Before approving additional capacity at Lutheran General Hospital, the Board should require Advocate to demonstrate that it can do the following:

1. Stabilize and retain a qualified skilled maintenance workforce;
2. Resolve its labor disputes through good-faith bargaining;
3. Address reported infrastructure concerns; and
4. Ensure current facilities consistently meet the highest safety and infection control standards.

Until these steps are taken, proceeding with a \$99 million expansion at Lutheran General Hospital heightens operational strain and could undermine patient confidence. Local 399 and the following members of the Illinois General Assembly appreciate this opportunity to share our concerns with the Board, and we welcome opportunities to discuss this further.

Rep. Jaime Andrade, Jr.
Rep. Dagmara Avelar
Rep. Harry Benton
Rep. Diane Blair-Sherlock
Rep. John Cabello
Rep. Mary Beth Canty
Rep. Kelly M. Cassidy
Rep. Sharon Chung
Rep. Justin Cochran
Rep. Michael Crawford
Rep. Lisa Davis
Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado
Rep. Anthony DeLuca
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Rep. Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar
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Rep. Suzanne Ness
Rep. Aarón M. Ortiz
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Rep. Nabeela Syed
Rep. Ann Williams
Sen. Christopher Belt
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Sen. Bill Cunningham
Sen. Paul Faraci
Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton
Sen. Michael Halpin
Sen. Linda Holmes
Sen. Adriane Johnson
Sen. Emil Jones, III
Sen. Patrick Joyce
Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel
Sen. Robert Martwick
Sen. Laura Murphy
Sen. Robert Peters
Sen. Mike Porfirio
Sen. Willie Preston
Sen. Doris Turner
Sen. Rachel Ventura
Sen. Celina Villanueva
Sen. Ram Villivalam

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Kelly
President & Business Manager
IUOE Local 399