

RECEIVED

APR 23 2026

HEALTH FACILITIES •
BRIDGES BETWEEN PEOPLE



April 14, 2026

Debra Savage, Chair
Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: Support for CON Application of Deaconess Illinois
Medical Center for Inpatient Obstetric Care Service

Dear Chairwoman Savage:

On behalf of Ferrell Hospital, a proud partner of the Deaconess Illinois regional health system, I write to express our strong support for the proposed restoration of obstetric and maternity services at Deaconess Illinois Medical Center in Marion. As part of the same integrated system, we understand both the urgency of the maternal health challenges facing Southern Illinois and the thoughtful, coordinated approach this project represents. With a majority of counties in the region lacking maternity services, and many existing facilities operating at or beyond capacity, too many families are forced to travel long distances or across state lines to access care. Reestablishing a modern OB unit in Marion will significantly reduce these barriers, expand regional capacity, and ensure more patients can receive high-quality prenatal and delivery services closer to home.

This project reflects the strength of a system-based model, leveraging shared clinical expertise and resources to deliver consistent, high-quality care across Southern Illinois. By revitalizing an existing facility and aligning services with the needs of a population that includes a high percentage of Medicaid-covered births and high-risk pregnancies, Deaconess Illinois is advancing a sustainable solution to a critical gap in care. Ferrell Hospital fully supports this initiative and respectfully urges its approval as a vital step toward improving maternal and neonatal outcomes throughout the region.

Sincerely,

Rachael Prather
Chief Executive Officer
Ferrell Hospital