



Southern Illinois University

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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CARBONDALE, IL 62901

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APR 24 2026

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

April 22, 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

Dear Chairwoman Savage,

I am pleased to offer our strong support for the proposed restoration of obstetric and maternity services at Deaconess Illinois Medical Center on behalf of Southern Illinois University. As an academic institution committed to educating the next generation of healthcare professionals, we recognize the profound impact that access to comprehensive clinical training environments has on student success and workforce development. The reestablishment of a full-service OB unit in Marion will provide critical opportunities for students in medicine, nursing, and allied health programs to gain hands-on experience in prenatal care, labor and delivery, and neonatal services – areas that are currently limited by the scarcity of regional training sites.

Southern Illinois continues to face significant gaps in maternal healthcare access, with a large share of counties lacking local maternity services and remaining facilities operating under capacity constraints. These challenges not only affect patient outcomes but also hinder the ability of academic programs to place students in diverse, high-quality clinical settings close to where they live and study. Establishing obstetric services in Marion will help address both issues simultaneously by strengthening the regional healthcare infrastructure while creating a sustainable pipeline for training and retaining healthcare professionals in underserved rural communities.

The proposed project represents a strategic investment in both healthcare delivery and workforce development for Southern Illinois. By expanding access to essential maternal services and integrating those services into a broader regional system of care, this initiative will improve outcomes for families while supporting the educational mission of our university. We believe this effort will enhance the quality and accessibility of clinical education, encourage graduates to

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remain in the region, and contribute to long-term improvements in community health. For these reasons, we strongly support this application and respectfully urges its approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Morgan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Robert D. Morgan, Dean