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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES DIVISION

April 10, 2026

Hon. 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 the Provision of Obstetric Care Services

Dear Chair Savage:

On behalf of the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), which represents 60 small and rural hospitals serving communities across Illinois, I write to express our strong support for the Certificate of Need (CON) application submitted by Deaconess Illinois Medical Center to establish inpatient obstetric care services in Marion.

Rural healthcare providers across Illinois are facing increasing and well-documented challenges in sustaining maternal health services. Over the past decade, many rural communities have experienced the loss of labor and delivery units due to workforce shortages, declining birth volumes, and financial pressures. As a result, expectant mothers in these areas are often required to travel significant distances to access care—creating delays in treatment, increased risk of complications, and added emotional and financial stress for families.

The proposed obstetric unit in Marion represents a critical step toward reversing this trend. Restoring access to local labor and delivery services will improve maternal and infant health outcomes, strengthen care coordination, and ensure that families can receive safe, timely, and high-quality care close to home. This is particularly important in southern Illinois, where gaps in access to obstetric services have created significant barriers to care.

ICAHN's member hospitals serve as the backbone of healthcare delivery in rural communities, providing not only essential clinical services but also acting as key economic drivers and community anchors. These hospitals support local jobs, contribute to the economic vitality of their regions, and play a central role in maintaining the health and stability of the populations they serve. Ensuring access to maternal health services is fundamental to sustaining these communities and supporting the long-term well-being of rural families.

ICAHN is deeply committed to advancing the strength, sustainability, and transformation of rural healthcare in Illinois. Through advocacy, collaboration, and innovative programming, we work alongside our member hospitals to address critical gaps in care, including maternal health. The proposed expansion of obstetric services at Deaconess Illinois Medical Center aligns directly

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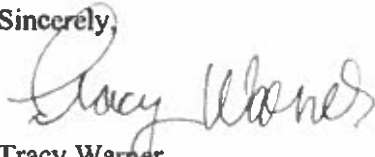
with these priorities and represents a meaningful investment in the future of rural healthcare delivery.

Importantly, this project is not simply the addition of a service line—it is the restoration of a vital component of community-based care that has been lost in many parts of our state. It signals a commitment to rebuilding access, improving outcomes, and supporting families at one of the most important moments in their lives.

For these reasons, ICAHN respectfully urges the Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board to give favorable consideration to this CON application. Approval of this project will help ensure that mothers and newborns in this region have access to the care they need, when and where they need it most.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tracy Warner", written in dark ink.

Tracy Warner
Executive Director