

Ms. Courtney R. Avery  
Administrator  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson  
Second Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

**RECEIVED**

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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

March 18, 2011

Dear Ms Avery,

Today, I attempted to exercise my right as a citizen to speak against the construction of the Mercy Hospital in Crystal Lake. Although I arrived nearly an hour before the scheduled start of the hearing and was second on the sign up list, of those opposing the hospital, I was not allowed to speak. Under the affiliation section of the form, I identified myself as a "resident and MD".

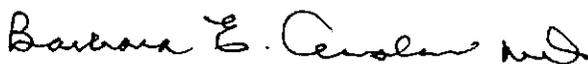
While it is true that I am on the medical staff of Centegra Hospital, I did not come to speak with their group, but as a private citizen. Much to my surprise, my name was never called. When I questioned why, it appeared that Centegra crossed my name off your sheet and added it to the bottom of their list. At number 69 of 69, I was guaranteed not to speak. Although, when I arrived there were no more than 12 people on their list, my last place standing was explained because "they didn't know I was coming". Of course they didn't. I came to speak on my own behalf. By the time I realized what happened, it was too late to impact the outcome so I left to prepare my comments in a written format, as you suggested.

I am writing to you, the Administrator of the Review Board, because I believe this was an unfair process. I told them I had come to speak as a resident of the community and signed up as such. I feel that my civic freedom was usurped without my consent. By now, we should have moved past the time when large corporations influence public opinion by stepping on personal freedoms. Incidentally, I noticed that all the speakers, at the hearing, opposing the application were affiliates of a hospital. Perhaps there were other independent thinkers and members of the general public, who were put in my position. I mention this as a way to safe guard their rights in the future.

It would seem the sign up sheet was designed to give everyone a fair opportunity to be heard and by identifying affiliations, provide for a balanced representation of opinion. No one should have the right to remove another's name without their consent. Allowing it would provide the opportunity to monopolize the testimony and this is contrary to the purpose of the open hearing process. Certainly, hospitals can manage the order of their own speakers but should not be allowed to silence the voices of private citizens.

It was a pleasure to meet you today and it was interesting to watch and listen to the proceedings. I appreciate your time in reviewing and considering the content of this letter. Enclosed you will find my reasons for opposing a new hospital in this county.

Sincerely,



Barbara E. Amsler, MD