



**MetroSouth**  
MEDICAL CENTER

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

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APR 21 2011

HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

10-078

April 12, 2011

Mr. Dale Galassie  
Acting Chairman  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 W. Jefferson  
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Chairman Galassie:

As Chief Executive Officer of MetroSouth Medical Center, I support the application by Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) to discontinue services at Oak Forest Hospital. Plain and simple, this proposal is good public policy.

MetroSouth Medical Center is located in Blue Island, not far from Oak Forest. We understand the vital role that safety net services play in the communities of southern Cook County. Like CCHHS, we fundamentally impact the lives of tens of thousands of people every year that might otherwise not be able to receive care.

We also understand that all health systems must re-evaluate how they provide care in light of healthcare reform and medical advances. One thing is clear: No matter what your patient base, ambulatory and specialty care must be a focus moving forward. This is even more imperative given that CCHHS serves a low-income population. Some of its patient base currently relies solely on emergency departments for medical care. Emergency department services are costly and can provide too little care too late for those who do not see doctors regularly.

As we work together to improve the area's safety net services, we must give low-income residents more access to primary care physicians and specialists. MetroSouth is doing that through the health centers we recently opened throughout the Southland. CCHHS plans to do that by overhauling its Oak Forest campus. Discontinuing Oak Forest Hospital as it currently operates is the first step toward bringing CCHHS patients the preventative, diagnostic and specialty care they need.

Southern Cook County has no shortage of nearby emergency and inpatient facilities. Those who currently use Oak Forest Hospital for these purposes will still have access, including through our own hospital in Blue Island. CCHHS and MetroSouth are partners in the region, and we will continue to collaborate on improving safety net services in the years to come.

Cook County Health and Hospitals System's plan would replace an underutilized hospital with a new model that would give patients the services they truly need to maintain their health. I urge the Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve this request to discontinue Oak Forest Hospital.

Respectfully,

Enrique Beckmann, MD, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer

Dean M. Harrison  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

April 15, 2011

The Honorable Dale Galassie  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
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**Re: Support for Project 10-078, Oak Forest Hospital**

Dear Chairman Galassie:

On behalf of Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH), I am writing to express support for the proposal by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) to transform its Oak Forest Hospital campus to a hub for outpatient specialty, primary and immediate care as well as diagnostic testing. The development of this outpatient facility is contingent on the discontinuation of inpatient services at Oak Forest Hospital and, therefore, we support the CCHHS CON Application.

NMH is an academic medical center where the patient comes first. Our longstanding commitment to make quality care available, regardless of patients' ability to pay, is the foundation of our *Patients First* mission - to improve the health of the community we serve by putting patients first in everything we do. Access to specialty care for is a critical issue for many communities throughout Cook County. CCHHS helps provide the backbone of our regional health care safety net; and, NMH and CCHHS have collaborated on a number of initiatives to help address this issue. NMH has collaborated with CCHHS to support postgraduate training programs, research endeavors and service delivery. Like CCHHS, NMH also collaborates with a number of Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and community health centers throughout the region to furnish specialty and inpatient care to their patients.

NMH has been briefed on CCHHS' Strategic Plan, and we commend its leadership for its long term thoughtfulness, especially at a time when government resources are diminishing. Transforming the Oak Forest campus from what is currently very limited capacity to provide inpatient services to one that allows CCHHS to address the critical need for outpatient specialty and diagnostics services will bring value to the County's underserved population. We believe it is also sound public policy consistent with the "right care, right place" principles embodied in national health reform.

I respectfully encourage the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to approve this application for permit in the interests of expanded access for those most in need.

Sincerely,



Cc: Toni Preckwinkle  
Warren Batts  
William T. Foley