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HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

May 31, 2011  
Illinois Health Facilities and  
Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street—2<sup>ND</sup> Floor  
Springfield, Illinois

Dear Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board:

A sobering statistic is that the two age groups with the highest rates of suicide are America's youth and its senior citizens. At least the younger group generally has health and vigor while for seniors, those conditions are a source of concern and a threat their "quality of life." I am not a psychologist but am certain their must be a direct correlation between suicide and mental health.

This is a letter of support for the Certificate of Need (CON) permit sought by Proctor Community Hospital. Their proposed 18 bed Inpatient Geropsych unit will undoubtedly improve the healthcare and well-being of the older adult population in the Central Illinois area. Older adults tend to have complex, comorbid mental and physical health problems that require a holistic approach and interdisciplinary care. Addressing comorbid mental and physical health problems concurrently by integrating and coordinating medical and mental health care services within a single therapeutic environment will result in decreased emotional suffering, improved physical health, lessened disability, and a better quality of life for older adults and their families.

As a retired business owner and a father of five, I have been exposed to a wide range of stresses over my career but can state unequivocally that my own mental health is more challenged now than at any phase of my life. I am 80 yrs. old. Enough said for the glories of the "GOLDEN YEARS."

I support Proctor Community Hospital's CON permit application for multiple reasons. It is estimated that only half of older adults who admit having mental health problems actually receive treatment from any health care provider, and only a small percentage of those receive specialty mental health services. It is anticipated the demand for mental and behavioral health services will expand as the older population continues to grow. Central Illinois is currently not equipped to handle this demand, as there is a shortage of Inpatient Psychiatric Beds, especially for the older adult population. Proctor Community Hospital's proposed Inpatient Geropsych unit will increase the accessibility of psychiatric services for older adults in the Central Illinois area. Hence, I am pleased Proctor Community Hospital is applying for a CON permit and add my support to their request.

Sincerely,  
*Paul M. Coogan*

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