

July 25, 2011
Dale Galassie, Chairman

**S O U T H
S U B U R B A N
P A D S**



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**AN INTERFAITH
COALITION OF
FAITH
COMMUNITIES
& CONCERNED
CITIZENS
SERVING
HOMELESS
PERSONS**

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
Fax: 217-785-4111

Dear Chairman Galassie:

I am writing in opposition to the proposal (11-037) to discontinue services at Oak Forest Hospital. I urge you to deny the request by the Cook County Health and Hospitals Systems Board.

I am the nurse coordinator of the Homeless Healthcare Network for South Suburban PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter). We manage a network of faith communities to provide shelter to the homeless in the South Suburbs of the Chicago area. My patients are in need of care for post-surgery and medical conditions. Oak Forest Hospital is centrally located between our Northern most locations and our far south clientele. The alternative location for free care is Stroger Hospital, which is many miles and several hours by bus. Our 'guests' would have to walk to and from a different faith community each night arriving at 7pm, to sleep on a pad on the floor, only to arise the next morning before 6 am with no place to locate during the day. I have asked Ms. Preckwinkle about respite care, and was informed none would be available. I have contacted the local hospitals and they, to date, have no policy in place to accommodate these patients for inpatient care. One of these hospitals in the only local trauma center, and its ER is often on bypass, decreasing their ability to provide EXTRA care. Ambulances do not go to Oak Forest Hospital, currently, suggesting that a patient would be taken to a local ER, where they may not be able to be treated, hopefully receive necessary immediate care, and be sent on their way with no recovery time. Oak Forest is our only hope. I have heard that there are so few patients in their care, but that has more to do with the severe decrease in staff and discharge of patients because of this unavailability of care than a lack of patients needing care. In March and May of 2011, the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board concluded that the Oak Forest proposal would increase the number of intensive care / long-term care beds needed and cause a capacity crunch at surrounding hospitals. Also, the board concluded that there is no indications that surrounding hospitals can or will accept these patients. The current proposal from the county does nothing to address these concerns.

For these reasons, we ask you to deny the County's request.

Sincerely,

Jan Korenchan, RN
South Suburban PADS

