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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Ms. Courtney Avery
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
2nd Floor
525 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery:

My husband has been on and off dialysis treatment for over a decade. Basically, it's just become a part of our lives now. I love and support my husband no matter what, but it absolutely puts a strain on our family for him to go to dialysis three times a week. I feel like any way that you can reduce the stress or inconvenience for dialysis patients and their families, or give them another choice in the matter, it's a step in the right direction. This is why I support U.S. Renal care opening a new dialysis center in Plainfield.

Being on dialysis makes it hard to have a normal life. My husband struggles sometimes, but he is very independent, and he drives himself to treatment. Even though I worry about him, I can't drive him myself, because I work. But even if I didn't, it is important for him to maintain a sense of independence. Dialysis takes away so much control over your life and it is important for patients to keep some of it. But while I support his decision to drive himself, when he gets home, it's always a relief. So having a dialysis center closer to home is a huge deal for us.

It would mean a lot if there was a closer dialysis center, not just to my husband and me, but to other patients in Plainfield. For people living around here, it can be a pretty long trek to get to a facility. If we could bring one closer, why wouldn't we? Why make these people drive further? I worry a lot more about my husband driving on some of these icy, snowy days. I just hold my breath until he walks back in the door.

We also have an adult son who is mentally handicapped, but my husband and I like to make sure he's as independent as possible, so he has part-time a job at the supermarket. Since he does not drive, it is up to my husband and me to take him. He loves his job, and we like taking him, but it is not always possible or convenient. We already have to juggle our schedules to drive him back and forth, and it's not like we can just leave him at work for an hour until one of us is free to pick him up. Having a dialysis center closer to my family would free up a lot of time and be a huge help in allowing our son to continue working.

In the past, there have been some challenges with the dialysis centers we've gone to. Giving patients like my husband a choice in the matter is really important. My husband hasn't necessarily always had a choice. If he didn't like something about his dialysis center, he couldn't really do much about it, because dialysis is so critical to his health. As a wife, I want to know that my loved ones are being cared for like a member of the family and not just like a number or someone to plug into a machine. Going there needs to be pleasant and all that, but even more so, you need to walk away feeling safe, which is why I support a new U.S. Renal Care facility.

My husband and I were excited to hear about the prospect of a new facility, but unfortunately, we had a scheduling conflict on the day of the public hearing and were unable to attend. We put our full support behind this effort, so please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Meehan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "H".

Heidi Meehan
m.meehan03@att.net