

August 21, 2012



Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
Second Floor  
525 W. Jefferson St.  
Springfield, IL 62761

**RE: 12-060 H. Douglas Singer Mental Health Center, Rockford**

Dear IHFS Board Members:

The future status of Singer Mental Health Center is a matter of critical importance to our region.

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Rockford Chamber of Commerce, I write to encourage you to support the continuation of services for those with behavioral disorders that are served in the northern Illinois Region.

The Rockford Chamber of Commerce and its Government Affairs Council urge the State of Illinois to maintain and support the continuing operation of the Singer Mental Health Center in Rockford. Absent the continuing operation of Singer, the Chamber urges the acceptance of the proposed alternate service delivery plan being proposed by Rosecrance, SwedishAmerican Health System and other regional partners, for a regional, collaborative service delivery model that will address the significant needs for those with behavioral disorders in our region.

If such funding is not provided, this gap in services will quickly become apparent in Rockford and surrounding communities once Singer closes. All indications are that Singer will close in October, regardless of the objections of staff and community residents.

Absent Singer, and absent a coordinated, adequately funded network of services to respond to psychiatric crises, we will most certainly feel the impact in our hospital emergency rooms and through the unnecessary and inappropriate arrest and incarceration of individuals with mental health needs.

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Behavioral health providers in Northern Illinois took the initiative last winter to begin meeting regularly to assess current gaps in service and to design a system of care that could be a model for the state. Should Singer close, we are confident that we have the expertise and professional resources in our community to develop a network of consumer-focused programming that will keep Singer's closing from creating a catastrophe.

One plan that shows promise for quick and effective emergency response is creation of a triage center to serve individuals in psychiatric crisis, move them toward stability and follow them as they are reintegrated into community life. Such a center needs funding that has, as yet, not been offered.

We urgently request your help in securing funding so that services will be in place when they are needed and to prevent a gap in care that will create a crisis in our community and great distress for individuals experiencing psychiatric emergencies.

Sincerely,



Einar K. Forsman  
President/CEO