



National Alliance on Mental Illness

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OCT 28 2013

24 October 2013

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Ms. Courtney Avery
Administrators
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson
Springfield IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery:

I am writing on behalf of NAMI Illinois to support the Alexian Brothers Medical Center's project 13-062 to create a psychiatric care unit at their hospital in Elk Grove Village.

We at NAMI Illinois are acutely aware of the shortage of mental health treatment beds in Illinois hospitals. Since the 1960s the number of psychiatric beds in Illinois has dropped by almost 90%, and the recent closure of two state hospitals, Singer and Tinley Park, has only made matters worse. The state is also converting many of the remaining beds in state hospitals to forensic beds, further eroding capacity. There are now more mental health patients in Cook County jail than in all the other residential treatment facilities in the state, public and private combined. While many more beds are needed, this project will provide some much needed relief to Illinois's crumbling mental health system.

NAMI Illinois is regularly represented at meetings of the Mental Health Summit, an umbrella group of mental health service providers and advocates. There we hear regular reports of people with mental health crises who go or are taken to hospital emergency rooms and who need hospitalization but who are forced to wait in the ER for two, three or even more days until a psychiatric bed is available. Often the hospital they are finally placed in is far from home and family. The ABMC project will help alleviate this situation.

Alexian Brothers health systems, including the Behavioral Health Hospital and the Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health - the community mental health center for Palatine and Wheeling townships - are the major mental health providers in the northwest suburbs. They have seen tremendous growth in patient load over the past several years. Adding a psychiatric unit to the Medical Center hospital will help meet this need.

The entire Alexian Brothers system has an excellent reputation for quality care throughout the north and northwest suburbs. We strongly endorse this project and urge your Review Board to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,
Hugh Brady
Hugh Brady
Board President



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