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SENATOR DON HARMON
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MAR 14 2014

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

March 10, 2014

Ms. Kathryn Olsen, Chairperson
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Re: Holy Cross Hospital, Project 13-076

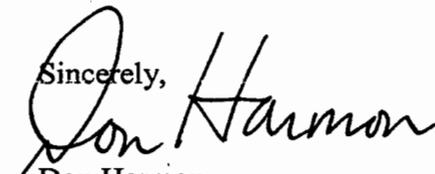
Dear Chairperson Olsen:

This letter will formalize my opposition to the Holy Cross Hospital project which includes the establishment of an inpatient psychiatric unit.

The top priority for the community's existing mental health care providers, which does not include Holy Cross Hospital, is to partner with community mental health organizations and other social service agencies. The providers and agencies invest time and resources to engage patients leaving inpatient programs and to help ensure that their long-term mental health care needs can be met in community-based programs. Agencies collaborating to interrupt the vicious cycle of mental illness in the community setting are needed to restore people's ability to function in social and occupational roles. Mental health and poverty are closely linked and interact in a complex negative cycle. There may be a perception that individuals with Medicaid or no insurance are being denied access to inpatient care because of availability but the truth is that there is nothing magic about being hospitalized for mental health treatment. Assuming the care is available, a person can access the services they receive in a hospital- psychiatrist and psychologist care and medical management while living in the community in their own environment. The addition of inpatient beds will have little impact on resolving the critical issues associated with the need for robust community-based services. In fact, rather than improving the mental health system, it will jeopardize the financial ability of current providers to continue to provide the level of services that they currently offer and adversely impact the ability of these providers to continue to provide a high quality service.

After years of attempting to meet rising demand with diminishing resources, mental health systems are stretched to the breaking point. In the State of Illinois, we need to develop the most effective and appropriate care and treatment for people who experience a mental illness. More inpatient mental health services are not one of the needed expansions.

The Health Facilities and Services Review Board should not approve the Holy Cross Hospital CON application.

Sincerely,

Don Harmon