

Christina H. Nelson

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Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
Illinois Department of Public Health
525 W. Jefferson, Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

31 July 2014

Dear Ms. Avery:

I am writing to oppose Carle Foundation's proposal (14-015) to add forty-eight medical/surgical beds. At the July 14, 2014 meeting, the IHFSRB voted "intent to deny," and I urge them to permanently deny the application when it comes back for further discussion. In my view, Carle is trying to steal patients from Presence Covenant in an effort to drive them out of business. Indeed, on July 22, 2014, our local newspaper, *The News-Gazette*, ran an article (enclosed) stating that Carle wants to purchase Presence Covenant Hospital in Urbana and the Presence facility in Danville.

Clearly, Carle's goal is to become the sole health care provider in East Central Illinois. If that happens, health care costs will continue to rise, and patients in our area will have no choice of health care providers.

Carle already has an undeservedly prominent place East Central Illinois health care.

- Our insurance rates are the highest in the state according to Health Alliance, the insurance company Carle owns. Therefore, it is logical to conclude the State of Illinois overpays to insure and treat UIUC employees who use Carle Clinic and Carle Foundation Hospital.
- Carle Foundation Hospital ranks in the lowest 25% of Illinois hospitals in the rate of hospital-acquired conditions, such as infections. Why would the state want to allow expansion of one of the direst hospitals in Illinois?
- Carle Foundation presently has a very turbulent relationship with the city of Urbana, where most of their property is located. Like all other hospitals in the state, they have excused themselves from paying property taxes, and Carle makes no Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). Consequently, our property taxes have risen by 10% this year and will undoubtedly continue to do so. If Carle has \$17,765,000 for the proposed building project, they have money to make PILOTs.

Carle is not a benevolent presence in our community. They run a controversial establishment, and the administration seems more interested in making money than treating patients. Carle's inflated fees and elaborate system for referrals is especially pernicious and not easily detected by anyone not using the system.

From personal experience, I know they shamelessly exploited ICHIP patients for years by refusing to join the Blue Cross network and by refusing referrals from other Clinics in the area. Example: when I was in the ICHIP program (administered by Blue Cross), the Carle rheumatologist (the only one in the area) refused to see me because I did not have Health Alliance insurance, even though I was willing to pay out of pocket, if necessary. It is my understanding that this is illegal. The Carle rheumatologist agreed to see me, but I was forced to get the referral from a Carle physician. When I needed a retina examination, Carle refused an outside referral and would not give me an appointment until I saw their optometrist and his assistant, even though I had been given a complete exam by my Mayo-trained ophthalmologist (for one-tenth the price) only months before I moved back to Urbana. Carle misses no opportunity to run up charges. Their treatment plans are driven either by greed or by arrogance: they either want the money or they believe Carle has the only competent doctors in downstate Illinois.

Carle's current policies cause financial hardship for small businesses and anyone not working for UIUC, because Carle Clinic has steadfastly refused to become a Blue Cross PPO provider. Even now, only Carle Clinic specialists are Blue Cross PPO providers; Internal Medicine, Family Medicine and Convenient Care physicians are not in any Blue Cross network.

I urge you to deny all requests by Carle Foundation and its entities to expand in any way or to become the sole provider of medical care in central Illinois.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina Nelson".

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