

Christina Nelson

2108 Grange Dr., Urbana, IL 61801-6609

Ms. Kathryn J. Olsen, Chair
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
c/o Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Department of Public Health
525 W. Jefferson, Second Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

5 August 2014

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This letter supersedes my letter of 31 July 2014, as new information has been called to my attention since I first wrote.

I remain vehemently opposed to Carle Foundation's proposal (14-015) to add forty-eight medical/surgical beds. At the 14 July 2014 meeting, the IHFSRB voted "intent to deny," and I urge the Board to finalize the denial when the issue is taken up again at the end of this month.

In a letter of 30 June 2014 posted on the IHFSRB web site, Stephanie Beever, Carle Foundation's Senior Vice President of System Strategic Development, admonished the Board that "Protecting a competitor's market position...is not within the purview of the IHFSRB." As Dr. Andrew Scheinman pointed out in his 4 August 2014 letter to the Board, Beever's argument is "not evidence-based" and "and should be ignored."

It is regrettable that Beever's letter, and indeed the entire issue of this expansion, concentrates on financial issues and an unproven benefit to a minute number of people Carle hopes to serve. **Surely, the most important issue at stake here is the health and well-being of the general population of east central Illinois. This population would not be well served if Carle became the sole health care provider in East Central Illinois, no matter the circumstances.** Health care costs would continue to rise for everyone, and Carle would be able to charge what they wish and further strengthen the position of Health Alliance, the insurance company they own. Carle would be able to shut competing insurance companies out of this market, causing hardship for individuals and small businesses alike.

Carle already has an undeservedly prominent place East Central Illinois health care, in my opinion. Our area's health and well being is already imperiled by the following:

- Our insurance rates are the higher than Chicago, according to Health Alliance, the insurance company Carle owns.
- 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. With all other hospitals in the state, by sleight of hand, they have excused themselves from paying property taxes. Carle makes no Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), a growing trend in communities around the country. Our property taxes have risen by 10% this year and will continue to increase. If Carle has \$17,765,000 in ready cash and securities for the proposed building project, they have money to pay their fair share in Urbana.
- After years of criticism and negative publicity generated by local health care advocates, Carle now provides charity care, but the institution is not a generally benevolent presence in our community. Their locally controversial business practices suggest Carle administrators are more interested in making money than treating patients. Carle's inflated bills, the newly-instituted \$200 facilities fee charged at every visit, and the elaborate system for referrals is especially pernicious and not easily detected by anyone not using the system. From my personal experience, I offer the following examples:
 - 1.) When I needed a retina examination soon after returning to Urbana, Carle refused an outside referral and would not give me an appointment until I saw their optometrist and his assistant first, even though I had been given a complete exam by my Mayo-trained ophthalmologist (for one-tenth the cost) about four months earlier.
 - 2.) A Carle specialist (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. My insurance agent informed me this is illegal. The Carle specialist finally agreed to see me, but I was forced to see a Carle physician to get the referral, because he would not accept a referral from a Christie physician or from any of the Kansas City physicians I consulted only weeks before.
- From my experience in the ICHIP program, I believe that Carle has knowingly and shamelessly exploited these vulnerable patients for years. The ICHIP program is administered by Blue Cross, and until quite recently, Carle physicians

refused to become participating providers in any Blue Cross plan. Even now, only Carle Clinic specialists are Blue Cross PPO providers; Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and Convenient Care physicians still are not Blue Cross participating providers.

Considering these and many other arguments, 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 black ink that reads "Christina Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Christina Nelson

Enc.--letter from Elizabeth Pollock opposing Carle's proposed expansion. Hopefully, the letter will be accepted without an original signature; she was out of town and emailed the letter to me before the 14 July 2014 meeting.

Attn: Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
Re: Proposed expansion of Carle Hospital in Urbana, Illinois

To Whom It May Concern:

It has recently come to my attention that Carle Hospital is planning an expansion of their facilities here in Urbana, Illinois, and that this Board is responsible for reviewing their application to proceed. I write as a concerned citizen of Urbana, and object to this expansion. Carle already has a monopoly on health care in this area, and the lack of competition is damaging both to patients and to the community at large. Additionally, Carle's refusal to contribute to the community in spite of the fact that it eats up huge areas of Urbana's taxable land is reprehensible. Carle is simultaneously eliminating competition for affordable health care and destroying the locality in which it resides through its selfish, money-grubbing tactics. This issue is important enough to me that I am writing this letter mere days after a close family member passed away and while my home is inundated with out of town visitors. I cannot attend the meeting personally today, but hear what we have to say: turn them down.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Pollock
715 S. Broadway
Urbana, Illinois 61801