September 15, 2014

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Ms. Courtney Avery
Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St. 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

RE: Project Application #14-043

Dear Ms. Avery:

I am writing to voice my concerns about the plans for the St. Elizabeth's Belleville hospital to move their location away from the current Belleville site. Having lived in this area for over 50 years, and having family members actively use both Belleville hospitals, I believe that this move will adversely impact the health of many residents of east Belleville; specifically the many elderly residents with inability to travel much distance for healthcare who have always depended on the ease of access to St. Elizabeth's. Along with Memorial's plans to move to private beds on the west end of Belleville, the math seems to say that there will not be adequate hospital bed availability for "Belleville" residents.

If St. Elizabeth's moves to the O'Fallon site, which seems physically too close to Memorial's new hospital, this will leave an imbalance:
1) Too many beds in OFallon/Shiloh area (leaving two new hospitals to suffer low census from a duplication of services in this one area.)
2) Inadequate coverage of easily accessible healthcare for east-end Belleville area residents.
3) West Belleville Memorial may not be able to handle the patient overflow caused by the St. Elizabeth's closure.

The St. Elizabeth's move also seems counterproductive, as Belleville has been effectively working on revamping the entire east "downtown" area, to increase residency and the tourist district. I believe a hospital is still necessary in east-Belleville for inpatient admits, minor surgery and emergency room services. Finally, I just feel it is sad and shocking to think that St. Elizabeth's will not be there to serve Belleville, as they always have.

Thank you for your time.

Lori Becherer

Lori Becherer
Millstadt, IL

C: Mr. Mike Constantino, Supervisor, Project Review Section