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September 18, 2014

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

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

Dear Ms. Avery,

I am the CEO of SSM Health Care, St. Louis, Missouri, which operates hospitals in Centralia and Mt. Vernon, Illinois. It also owns and operates a number of hospitals in the St. Louis region. I am pleased to, on its behalf, support the replacement of St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

St. Elizabeth's has been serving the Southern Illinois residents for decades, serving all residents of the MetroEast region. In working with St. Elizabeth's and its parent HSHS, and given our hospitals in Centralia and Mt. Vernon, I understand the unique challenges that face health care providers in the area directly East of St. Louis. There is a good deal of migration to St. Louis area hospitals in part due to the tertiary care they provide. However, this is also in part due to the fact that most of the hospitals were built prior to Hill Burton funding. They are outdated and not designed to the current standards of delivering hospital care.

Today, patients are more focused on technology and quality of care. They act as consumers of health care. In summary, they are more educated and understand that a state of the art facility may provide optimum treatment, quality and comfort during a difficult time.

In addition, physicians and staff prefer to work in an environment that is not only appealing to them, but more importantly provides them with a platform to utilize their training and skills. Many physicians and nurses trained in recent years simply do not want to work at a facility that cannot accommodate the types of technology, settings, equipment and design standards that they expect. Thus, the new hospital will aid in drawing physicians and staff to the area, which is always a challenge for Southern Illinois providers.

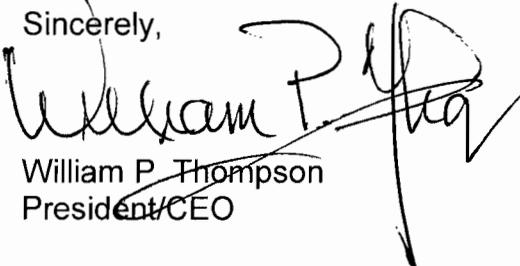
Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

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I applaud HSHS and St. Elizabeth's for deciding to invest in a new facility while also reducing its number of beds and taking a conservative approach to its service offerings. I am very pleased that the location is so accessible. The new hospital will be located directly off Interstate 64 which is a major route for all residents of the Metro East region.

I urge the Planning Board to approve the application to establish a new replacement hospital. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William P. Thompson". The signature is stylized and includes a large, sweeping flourish that extends downwards and to the right, crossing over the printed name below.

William P. Thompson
President/CEO