

Linda. S. Mehochko
985 Country Lakes Drive
New Baden, IL 62265
linda.mehochko@hshs.org

November 4, 2014

RECEIVED

NOV 07 2014

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: In Support of Project #14-043 St. Elizabeth's Hospital

Dear Ms. Avery:

As a resident of the metro east region, I am writing in support of St. Elizabeth's replacement hospital in O'Fallon, Illinois.

Except for two years after graduation from nursing school, I have lived in the Metro East all my life. Although I currently reside in New Baden, I have lived in East St. Louis, Fairview Heights, and O'Fallon. I am currently employed by HSHS, serving St. Elizabeth's Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, Breese and St. Joseph's Hospital, Highland. My husband and I are members of St. Henry Catholic Church in Belleville. We frequent particular shops and restaurants in Belleville and the surrounding areas as well as in Clinton County.

My affiliation with St. Elizabeth's Hospital spans more than 45 years, beginning as a Red Cross Youth Volunteer, working weekdays and weekends, during the summer and once school was in session. At the age of 16, my first 'paying' summer job was in the Housekeeping department, still at St. Elizabeth's. My memories of the OR and ER being on the 8th floor, the ICU of four (4) beds on the 7th floor, the Lab on the 2nd floor in what is currently the Gift Shop, are still vivid.

In the seventies, upgrades and expansion took place which brought the hospital to a more modern state. The ORs and ICU departments were moved and expanded. The ER was moved to street level. Other changes were made to better serve all patients who entered the doors of our hospital.

My tenure as a Registered Nurse began in 1979. The numerous services and opportunities for our patients which have been added over the years required more space and more technology. The surgical team, of which I belonged, endured constant obstacles in an area which could not accommodate these changes. In 2003, renovations occurred when the Surgery Department expanded to accommodate

advances in surgical intervention, such as advanced cardiac and laparoscopic procedures. There was marked improvement, but design had to be limited even then, due to our location.

For the last few years, my role with St. Elizabeth's and HSHS has transitioned into physician support as we move forward with the Electronic Health Record. Due to the infrastructure of an aging facility, I witness daily the issues when attempting to connect devices to wireless networks. Cell phones frequently do not work while in the hospital, resulting in challenges with physician and colleague communication. Family members must often leave the bedside in order to be able to connect with other family members, friends or their work. This causes dissatisfaction for so many. I have witnessed the endless hours of trying to care for the "scrapes and bruises" of maintaining a facility that needs more than just a Band-Aid – it needs a total replacement.

My family members and I have been patients at St. Elizabeth's over the years. We have felt the compassion of the colleagues and physicians. We have witnessed the looks on their faces when the news was not good. St. Elizabeth's is part of our family. We always hope we do not need a healthcare facility, but if we do, we want one that can meet today's growing standards of healthcare facilities – with up-to-date, state of the art technology and accommodations, private rooms, accessible restrooms, WI-FI connectivity throughout, a more secure and private manner for transporting patients between points so their status as a patient can be respected. The entire community deserves these same benefits, especially when they are in compromised positions due to health reasons. Unfortunately, many of these are not available on the current campus. But St. Elizabeth's can no longer apply band-aids. It is time that St. Elizabeth's moves forward to be able to give the entire community what it needs – regional healthcare that is accessible for all and to all. This cannot be attained on its current campus. A site is needed which is readily accessible to all. This site needs to be where the masses can reach it without further delays of unending stop signs, stop lights and rail road tracks. O'Fallon is the best choice for our replacement hospital.

I strongly urge your approval of St. Elizabeth's replacement hospital in O'Fallon, Illinois.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda S. Mehochko".

Linda S. Mehochko BSN, RN, CNOR