

Chairman  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street  
Second Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

14-060  
**RECEIVED**

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**HEALTH FACILITIES &  
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD**

Dear Chairman:

I am writing to express support for the proposed 10 bed Geriatric Psychiatric unit located at Illini Community Hospital in Pittsfield, Illinois. The need for inpatient geriatric services for individuals living in our small communities is great and access is limited. Additional psychiatric services was one of the priorities identified in the 2012 Illini community health needs assessment.

In Illinois, older adults make up 13.5 percent of the population, yet account for 21% of deaths by suicide. The highest rate of suicide in the nation is among persons age 65 and older. Approximately 20% of older adults experience undiagnosed depression; yet only 12-25% of older adults with depression ever receive treatment for it. There have been substantial increases in patients seen in the ED for behavioral health concerns – overall a 23.1% increase since 2009 (compared to overall ED visit increase of 5.4%.) Elderly patients seeking inpatient behavioral beds are waiting long periods of time and being transferred long distances in order to receive care.

Adult psychiatric services unfortunately face difficulty in managing the special emotional and physical needs of geriatric patients therefore creating the need to travel to a special center.

The planned unit at Illini will be staffed with an on-site advance practice nurse specially trained in psychiatric medicine and a board certified geriatric psychiatrist via telemedicine. The unit will be built with the special physical and medical needs of the geriatric population in mind.

WellSpring Resources has a Senior Service program that serves a significant (100+) number of older consumers with severe mental illness. This program would be a great asset for this population.

Sincerely,



Jennifer L. Craig, MA, MS, LCPC, SPHR  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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