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FEB 19 2016

HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Opposed to Palos Hospital South Campus Expansion

If the proposed demolition of the Palos Health and Fitness Center (PHFC) takes place as planned, it will be a devastating loss for Orland Park as well as for all the Southwestern suburbs. This beautiful facility welcomes people with chronic diseases, those with temporary and permanent disabilities and seniors who wish to maintain their health and quality of life; it cannot be replaced.

I became a member of Palos health and Fitness Center in 2005. I was amazed at the range of services that the Center provided. Palos Health and Fitness C enter was ahead of its time in providing best practices that are now being heralded on every morning television show, in virtually every published magazine, not to mention social media. People are aware of living healthy.

The pools, machines, walking ramp and lessons provided in specific Yoga and Tai Chi classes by dedicated professionals have changed lives dramatically. Research has shown that activity improves your strength and agility. It slows the loss of function. Patrons become more proactive about their lives when they plan and schedule activities with a purpose, follow thru and feel successful.

Confidence is built and reinforced. Getting up and out of the house for a purposeful period of time at PHFC is both productive and beneficial for the body and mind. This facility provides services for the entire population in the Orland area and is open 7 days/wk.

We are fortunate to be living in a time where people are becoming increasingly aware of ways in which we can maintain healthy lifestyles in order to avoid debilitating diseases such as Type II Diabetes, coronary heart disease and certain Cancers. Regular exercise, weight management and alleviating stress are all works in progress. Patients go to rehab for a limited number of physical therapy visits and their benefits run out.

If they are fortunate, they discover Palos Health and Fitness Center and become a member of a caring supportive community where they will receive education, encouragement, a sense of community and well-being. No monetary price can be put on well-being, but the price that the members of Palos Health and Fitness and the community at large will pay with the closing of its doors, will be phenomenal.

Respectfully submitted,
Flora Mortell
Member Government Relations Committee, Greater Illinois Chapter NMSS

14 February 2016
13927 Stockton Lane
Orland Park, Illinois 60467

Ms. Cortney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Department of Public Health
525 West Jefferson 2nd Fl.
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Subject: Opposition to Palos Hospital South Campus Expansion

Dear Ms. Avery

My wife and I have belonged to the Palos Health Facility for the last eight years, and it has all of the necessary equipment and facilities to meet our needs. When I had my knee replacement I prepared for it and did my rehab there.

My wife had an issue with back pain, and after frequenting other therapy clinics, she found the necessary relief with the assistance of the personnel at the Palos Health Club, and she now uses their facilities multiple times a week.

Yes, there are other health facilities in the area, but no they do not provide the same service as PHFC does. If Palos Hospital would like to expand there is a very large tract of land right across the street from their present campus in Orland. Why tear down a 12-year-old building and throw approximately 5,000 members under the bus!! You are urged to turn down this expansion program for this location. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Donald Januszyk

14822 West Ave
Orland Park, IL 60462

February 6, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I must say that I am personally very disappointed that the decision has been made to close the Palos Health and Fitness Center on many levels.

I have been using this facility at least three times per week over the past eight years. During the time my circulation, flexibility, strength, balance, and overall health have improved. With yoga classes, cardio equipment, the steam room, and various other classes I have benefitted from it greatly. My job requires that I sit all day, so I especially need to remain active before/after work. Not only have I benefitted, but I have seen many members with disabilities (Multiple Sclerosis, Fibromyalgia, Osteoarthritis, following various operations, Parkinson's, etc) using this facility. Many of these people would not be able to get as much out of a standard health club as they do Palos Health and Fitness Center. This facility is fully handicap accessible, the patrons and staff are patient for slower moving patrons, and the classes are appropriate for a wide variety of members.

As of last month PHF had 5,000 members. While it provides a common area for some of these people to socialize and congregate with others, it provides much more. The pool provides a place to exercise, build cardiovascular endurance, and improve flexibility. For residents of Orland Park, they can get transportation to the facility without having a vehicle or being able to drive which benefits the elderly, those with visual impairments, those who have just had surgery, and anyone without access to a car throughout the day an opportunity to exercise as well.

In terms of tearing down the fitness center, it seems like an enormous waste of resources. To tear down a structurally sound building it a waste of supplies, time, and money. Money to tear the building down, haul supplies away, build a facility, and then pay for a new facility for years on end. There is no reason the new cancer center couldn't be built on ground that is not yet occupied. Orland Park has promoted their recycling program in the community; however, how can people recycling a small container once a week compare to the resources thrown away by tearing down an entire building? A cancer center used to diagnose and treat while in and of itself is not a bad thing, wouldn't prevention be the better option? By exercising, reducing stress, and providing a social outlet for patrons of the PHC their risk of developing cancer is actually reduced.

Of course there are alternative gyms that can be used. Regarding the Moraine Valley Community College Health, Fitness, and Recreation Center, patrons that live in Orland Park will not be able to receive transportation through the township. Furthermore, this facility does not cater to those with disabilities. The Riviera Country Club is within the town; however, the $400 initiation fee and $80/month membership is not affordable to everyone and the classes do not compare. Lifetime Fitness does offer the convenience of being open all day; however, they cater to the more athletic and able-bodied population, not those with disabilities.

Please reconsider the plan that has been made as it appears people were not properly informed on this decision.

Sincerely,

Penelope Vahl-Niedoborski

February 8, 2016

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator

Illinois Department of Public Health

525 West Jefferson – 2nd Floor

Springfield, IL 62762

Dear Ms. Avery,

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the closing of the Palos Health and Fitness Club. As a retired teacher, I have been a member of the club since it's opening in 2001. It has been a vital part of my life for these last few years. In fact when I logged in today, I noticed it was my 4,050th visit. You can imagine how often I go the health club. It has helped me maintain my health and avoid many chronic diseases of the elderly. How ironic that a hospital that professes to be concerned about the health of its community members gave so little thought to the consequences of closing and tearing down this building. I use the facility for yoga, dance, walking, and weight classes, but so many seniors rely on the club for support dealing with MS, Parkinsons, and lung diseases. The social connection of club members is not a small consideration as well. When loneliness and social isolation are major causes of dementia, the Palos Health and Fitness Club provides a welcoming home away from home.

Please reconsider plans for closing the PHFC.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Fuhrman

708-250-0592

ronrofuhrman@yahoo.com

February 15, 2016

Deborah Ekdahl
16738 90th Ave.
Orland Hills, IL 60487

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Department of Public Health

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Deborah Ekdahl. I have had a muscular-skeletal condition for 10 years plus Fibromyalgia. In recent years I have become less and less mobile. I have been a member of the Palos Health and Fitness Center for a year and a half. My RA doctor, Dr. Gregg of Loyola, prescribed water therapy which I can only do at the PHFC. If I do not do this therapy after a few days I cannot walk. After I go to the therapy pool I am so much better. I can get around and live my life but I must continue with the pool or I can't function.

There is no other pool like this anywhere near my home. Please don't take this health club away from our community. It is a necessity for me to maintain my life.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ekdahl

Deborah Ekdahl

Feb 16 2016

Dear Ms Avery;

I am protesting the closing and demolishing of the Palos Heights Fitness Center.

Carole Engberg
Palos Heights, IL
60463

2014

February 15, 2016

Robert Hertz
16738 90th Ave.
Orland Hills, IL 60487

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Department of Public Health

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 68 year old man with back pain from problems with my spine. It is necessary that I walk on a cushioned track like the one at PHFC. Treadmills and other machines don't work for me. If I can continue to use this facility I believe I will be able to avoid surgery. Without it I am not so sure.

While I use this track I also see seniors older than I and more seriously affected than I am, bravely struggling to put one foot in front of the other. This facility is clearly helping people live in the community and not forced into nursing homes.

The loss of PHFC would do serious harm to the residents of this area.

Sincerely,

Robert Hertz

February 14, 2016

Ms. Courtney Avery, Adminstrator

Ill. Dept.of Health

525 W. Jefferson, 2nd Fl.

Springfield IL 62761

RE: APPEAL PALOS HOSPITAL SOUTH CAMPUS EXPANSION

Dear Ms. Avery:

Palos Health and Fitness is truly a MODEL OPERATION and invaluable resource to people of all ages in the area. I have been a member for over ten years and a witness to its consistent well run operation, broad reach to individuals of all ages needing specialized health rehabilitation as well as those seeking more general health and fitness in an environment that supports this like no other in the area.

I started there when I fractured my patella and required delicate and professional therapy in their therapy pool. After the success of these sessions, I was able to participate in a full range of their water and other exercise classes, their walking track and also take advantage of the sessions on various health issues provided by medical professionals. The members are cordial yet serious about their efforts when there. There is a mix of age ranges, AND as a senior citizen I find that it meets and exceeds my expectations and consequently has enabled me to continue a healthy and fit life. THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL EVEN CLOSE TO THIS KIND OF FACILITY IN OUR AREA. I am heart broken that it might be closing.

For the reasons stated above, I urgently request that those responsible keep the Palos Health and Fitness Facility open. There is so much available land for a site in the area and close by to expand the south campus of Palos Hospital without dismantling a viable, working and valuable health club that currently exists.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of this request.

Karen Dolinick

8933 Riviera Parkway

Orland Park, IL 60662