February 23, 2016

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HEALTH FACILITIES & SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Ms. Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Department of Public Health
525 W. Jefferson, 2nd Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Avery,

I am a resident of Orland Park and a member of the Palos Health and Fitness Club, whose future is being at least partly by the committee hearing testimony on action 16-001 in the petition by Palos Community Hospital to tear down the health facility to replace it with something more profitable. I am opposed to the action.

While the hospital is trying to paint a picture of this as a health club being shut down, it is actually more than that. It is a lifeline for hundreds of senior citizens and others with Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Arthritis and various heart conditions who count on those pools to maintain movement, balance and a semblance of a "normal" life.

With lower back issues, I count on the therapy pool to do work to strengthen my core muscles, which I cannot do on land. My mother, who is 80 years old with advancing rheumatoid arthritis, is able to walk that track with her walker three times a week. It's helping keep her out of a wheelchair.

I am a business woman and I understand the need for the hospital to make money, but having seen their plans, it is very clear that they have enough land to build around the health and fitness structure. Please don't let them shorten the lives of so many people for a more profitable disease.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Styx

Cynthia Styx
17853 Brookfield Circle, Orland Park, IL 60467
708-995-5706

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

Ms. Avery,

I am writing to express my opposition to Palos Community Hospital's application to expand their South Campus. This expansion will result in the demolition of Palos Health & Fitness Center, which is a Certified Medical Fitness Facility.

Palos Health and Fitness Center, or PHFC, is vital to provide an accessible place for people who are elderly or have disabilities to exercise.

My parents drive from the north suburbs of Chicago once a week so my mom can attend the aquatics program that is geared towards helping to manage her Multiple Sclerosis. My parents moved to the north side of Chicago 3 years ago and looked to find a program comparable to what my mom had at PHFC when they lived in the south suburbs because it was so beneficial. My mom was not able to find such program closer to where she lives and thus commutes to the class to receive the benefits of being in an accessible pool of comfortable temperature and going to an accessible fitness center.

My mom's classmates have already done the research looking for another facility to meet their needs and have been unsuccessful in finding anything that will work. Many of the participants take the bus to the class, use the lift to get into the pool, benefit from automatic doors to enter the fitness center and lack of doors going into the locker rooms and plenty of sturdy bench space in the locker rooms. Finding a facility that meets that criteria has been difficult. Without PHFC, this group may not be able to get into a pool to exercise and will thus likely cause them to have increased disability.

I am truly disappointed by the lack of concern from Palos about all the people that will suffer both physically, emotionally and mentally once they close PHFC.

As a physical therapist, I have been trained to look at things ethically and not always make the best decision for me but look at what the best decision is for my patients. In this case, many of the people who currently go to PHFC do not have other fitness center options that will fit their specialized needs and thus may not be able to exercise if PHFC is closed and the expansion is made.

I have personally used PHFC and thought it was an impressive facility and was grateful that my mom has a place that she can go to exercise and allow her to better manage her MS.

Sincerely,

Alison Wild, DPT

Alison Wild
Doctor of Physical Therapy