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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the impending closing of Palos Health & Fitness Center. I can only assume the past few weeks have been filled with backlash from members of the facility who are just as devastated as I am about the fate of this fitness center. I want to share my thoughts and my story, and implore you to reconsider tearing down this facility.

My family has been members of Palos Health & Fitness Center since its inception back when it was at the 94th Avenue location. When hearing the plans of a newer, larger and more state of the art facility to be built on West Avenue, my parents (both in the medical field) thought the same thing: what a step ahead in the world of medicine. Having a facility with a track, lap and warm water therapy pools, sauna and steam rooms and an array of cutting-edge equipment puts Palos Community Hospital strides ahead of competitors with this proactive approach to health and wellness.

With that said, one can eat well, sleep well, use a fitness center to exercise and still fall prey to diseases such as cancer, and that is exactly what happened to my father. In April 2013, my father, a loyal member of Palos Health & Fitness Center since its inception, was diagnosed with Stage IV Metastatic Kidney Cancer, and was given 12-18 months to live. The cancer was discovered after months of pain in his hip grew so agonizing, he had a biopsy done only to find out the cancer had metastasized to his right hip. In addition to getting treatment to keep his cancer at bay and have at least some quality of life in his final months, he then had become completely immobile due to the debilitating state of his hip because of the metastasis. After receiving a few rounds of radiation, the bone weakened so much that he fractured his hip simply stepping on a scale one morning. He went to University of Chicago to get his hip replacement, and planned on rehabbing it immediately after to regain his mobility for his final months of life. This is where Palos Health & Fitness Center, almost a second home to my father, came in to help him more than any of us could even imagine.

He was set up with a physical therapist to help him regain some mobility, particularly one who has experience in cancer fitness (not something you can find at facilities in this area). Both walking up the steps and using the indoor track to walk around expedited his recovery process and helped him regain his mobility. He was then able to return to exercising at the facility in order to maintain his strength, coordination and balance to have some quality of life in his final months. Palos Health & Fitness Center was the only place he went when he left the house in his final months. With being so sick and so fragile, no other gyms could have provided the care and understanding that is at this medically integrated facility. He was able to walk around the quiet track (which at the Sportsplex is extremely loud and disruptive as it surrounds three massive basketball courts-not what sick, and in this case, a dying person needs to be around) and keep moving each day. He also felt as if he wasn't being judged at Palos Health & Fitness for being so sick. The facility is home to a number of other guests with cancer, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, etc. who all can come together and exercise without fear of judgment. Beyond that, the facility is staffed with fitness specialists who all have undergraduate degrees in areas such as exercise science, kinesiology, physical therapy, etc. (most other gyms in the area have trainers with an irrelevant degree to health and wellness, they simply have one certification). The staff at Palos Health & Fitness are trained professionals who are able to give the right care to the facility's members.

Now you are asking the members to disperse to gyms that are NOT health clubs? They do not have qualified staff like Palos Health & Fitness, they do not have the amenities, and they cannot provide the care and atmosphere of Palos Health & Fitness. No other gym in the area has all of the qualities that make up a health & fitness center. My father had cancer for 13 months, and passed away in May 2014-

spending every single day leading up to his transition to hospice in the care of those at Palos Health & Fitness Center.

I do want to make this clear: I completely understand that there is a need for Palos Community Hospital to build a complex that can help in the treatment of diseases such as cancer. Unfortunately, that is where we are at as a society where we need facilities that can help with treatment. What I do not understand, is why Palos Health & Fitness Center cannot stay open and the hospital purchase the empty land near the fitness center and primary care center? Or the former land of the Andrew Corporation just down the street? Palos Health & Fitness Center is a facility that takes both a proactive and reactive approach to health and wellness. Proactive in the sense that people can exercise, see a registered dietician, work out with a fitness specialist, etc. in efforts to not fall prey to disease. A reactive approach in the sense that, unfortunately, one can do everything "right" and still fall prey to disease-therefore they see a physical therapist, use a therapy pool, work with a fitness specialist, walk on the track, etc. as part of the treatment and recovery process. Why can this unique facility not stay and land close by be used for this new hospital complex?

One of my final points is, from a business perspective, what Palos Community Hospital can do to stand out from its competitors. It comes as no surprise that University of Chicago, one of the leading oncology hospitals, is expanding and building a massive outpatient center in Orland Park at 143rd and LaGrange Road. This facility will not be equipped with any form of fitness center. Palos Community Hospital pales in comparison to a massive university known for their oncology unit. A massive piece of collateral that Palos Community Hospital has is Palos Health & Fitness Center-which is the proactive and reactive approach to health and wellness that no other competitor (both gym and hospital) in the area has. I implore you to keep Palos Health & Fitness Center, especially because the hospital can prescribe patients being treated at the new facility to work with physical therapists, registered dieticians, fitness specialists, etc. at Palos Health & Fitness Center which will generate more revenue for the hospital and something competitors do not have. The more patients are seeking treatment for disease, they are also seeking ways to recover beyond medicine-fitness. Wouldn't the hospital want that outlet as a way to not only help patient recover, but from a business sense generate revenue, likely get more members in the door if they are coming from treatment nearby, and stand out from competitors?

Please, I implore you not to close Palos Health & Fitness Center. If my father were alive today, I would not have to write this letter on his behalf. But because he did lose his battle to cancer, I felt it was my responsibility to highlight how Palos Health & Fitness Center made his final months bearable, and the facility is in fact an asset to patient recovery and quality of life. So many of the members of Palos Health & Fitness Center have an improved quality of life because of that facility, and it is shameful and devastating to hear the hospital wants to take that away from them. No other gym in the area has those amenities, the staff and the atmosphere of Palos Health & Fitness Center. Build the new facility, just do not tear down the fitness center to do so. So many lives are impacted by Palos Health & Fitness Center, and they should not be negatively impacted when a new facility can be built elsewhere. Palos Community Hospital has a leg up on the competition with Palos Health & Fitness Center- please think about where we are heading as a society with a facility that is both a proactive and reactive place for health and wellness.

Sincerely,
Member of Palos Health & Fitness Center

To Whom It May Concern:

As a physical therapist, I have been educated on the many benefits of exercising as part of a healthy lifestyle. The Palos Health and Fitness Center is a facility that allows members of the community to work on various aspects of their health. The equipment and the pool allow people to work on strength, endurance, balance, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. The yoga classes allow people to work on flexibility and relaxation to decrease stress. The friendly staff provides an environment for patrons of all levels of physical abilities to improve and maintain their functional abilities.

The other facilities listed as alternates do not offer the same facilities for people with disabilities. Transportation can also be provided by the township which is also not available with the other options. The lower cost makes it a more affordable option as well.

As it well known there are many cancer centers to both diagnose and treat cancer. The new proposed facility will offer then same services as many other places already do. The real question is: isn't it better to prevent diseases in the first place than to try to fix them later?

It terms of tearing down the existing PHFC, it seems a waste of facility that is currently in use by many members. In the town of Orland Park, there are areas of land currently not being used that would not negatively affect people attempting to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Is this facility really needed and in this exact location? Please take all these factors into consideration prior to the destruction of the PHFC.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth, PT

Elizabeth, Physical Therapist

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March 7, 2016

The following is important for Friends of Loyola. The University of Chicago is building a linear accelerator in Orland Park. In order for Loyola and PCH to keep up and compete, to offer better state of the art cancer care, they will need to put in a proton accelerator with an MRI & Cat Scan in the same treatment room. This enables the proton beam to zero in on the geometry of the tumor, where because of the brag effect 90% of its radiation (Ghaus) is released with only 10% leaving the tumor minimizing peripheral damage compared to cyber and gamma knives and linear accelerators. For larger tumors the 10% release can be made more negligible by fractionating the treatments into multiple smaller treatments, where the sum of the 90% treatments (10 to 30) equals the radiation to kill the tumor. Consult your nuclear physist. This is the wave of the future: to destroy tumors with minimal peripheral damage to surrounding tissue. You will need something like this to better compete now and in the future. Presently, only M.D. Anderson, Cadence and Mayo Clinic have a setup like this.

This kind of equipment needs a firm piece of land. To put this kind of money into the knob hill at 153rd & West Ave., surrounded by peat bog is not a stable idea. Finding more suitable land to build such high tech equipment on now and in the future when you need to improve expand and grow as future needs inevitably arise is a better plan.

To be fair to your shareholders, Loyola and PCH should get an unbiased professional report from an engineering firm that checks land for its suitability to build "What?" on.

As for PCH they will shut down PHFC no matter what. They have fallen under total mismanagement. This will be the beginning of there slow decline. They built PHFC to be as much a health center as a fitness center and did a terrific job. It is a real gem, one of the best of its kind. It was run properly putting people back on their feet and most would stay and bring in family and friends having been taught that fitness is the best medicine. PCH should have got there public relations people to highlight what they were doing: There success in the media. The building ,rehab program and people (personal trainers, and physical therapists) was a model for doing what it did and should have been on national TV as such. At 4 to 5K memberships they should have been close to breaking even. The membership was being constrained and not growing because too many times the parking lot was full. Too often you could not get parked. They encouraged us to come in at earlier or later times and some of us did, but to grow membership they needed to put in more parking. They were the best at what they did with the health and fitness center. It could be resurrected again but that would take new commitment.

It would not hurt their public relations and only help, have a symbiotic relationship, with the three centers they are going to build: cancer, cardio and neurology. Weight loss, exercise and fitness will only improve the outcome for all three. PCH, you want better health care for all? Just do It.!

Sincerely, William J. Kane

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