



CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF CHICAGO

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

March 16, 2016

Ms. Courtney R. Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

16-008

Dear Ms. Avery:

As Fire Commissioner for the Chicago Fire Department, I am writing this letter in support of the University of Chicago Medical Center's (UCMC) Certificate of Need Application for the Get Care project, which proposes to increase access to complex care, emergency and trauma services. This project is not only important to our EMS region, but to the patients and visitors we serve throughout Chicago, Illinois.

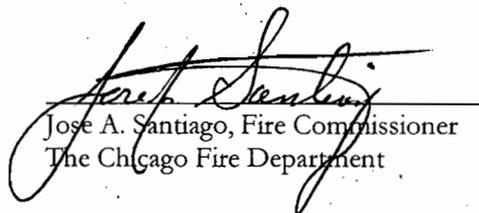
Our patients are significantly impacted by the misdistribution of specialty facilities that exists in pockets of the city, which mainly includes the south side of Chicago and the disparity this creates. While Chicago has four (4) adult trauma centers, none of them are geographically located on the south side of the city. In fact, south Chicago has experienced a significant reduction in inpatient and emergency capacity because of hospital closures.

The Chicago Fire Department routinely monitors EMS response times and the frequency of hospital bypass. Since UCMC's instituted additional beds two (2) years ago, their hours on bypass have decreased. However, we are seeing the numbers are again rising. Overcrowding, both in UCMC's Emergency Department and its inpatient beds continue to force UCMC's Emergency Department to go on frequent bypass. In addition to this, UCMC's rates of diversion remain among the highest in the state of Illinois. As you are aware, when UCMC is on bypass, EMS does not have the capability to transport patients to that hospital.

Because the pre-hospital and hospital components of the EMS system are integrated, when diversion at UCMC is lower, the rest of the EMS system benefits. UCMC's project would mean that more people can receive a full spectrum of specialty services and emergency health care that is in closer proximity to their residential home.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact my office or Leslee Stein-Spencer, of my staff, at leslie.stein-spencer@cityofchicago.org or at 312/746-4634. On behalf of the Chicago Fire Department, I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Kindest regards,


Jose A. Santiago, Fire Commissioner
The Chicago Fire Department