

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA Great Lakes Health Care System
Veterans Integrated Service Network 12
5000 South 5th Avenue, Building 18
Hines, IL 60141-3030



June 14, 2010

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Dear Executive Secretary:

VA Great Lakes Health Care System, Veterans Integrated Service Network 12 (VISN 12) would like to comment on the Warrior's Gateway project application for a new facility in Rockford, IL. In May 2010, Partner's for Caring Development Inc., in collaboration with Revere Healthcare and Transitional Living Services submitted a proposal for a 120 bed facility specializing in Traumatic Brain Injury and Polytrauma services. The primary focus of the facility would be for Veterans returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. VISN 12 would like to provide information on services currently available for this population and potential demand in the targeted area.

VISN 12 is one of 21 service networks administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs through the Veterans Health Administration. VISN 12 is responsible for providing health care services to Veterans in northern Illinois, Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan. These services are provided through 7 medical centers and 32 community outpatient clinics. A large multispecialty outpatient clinic has been administered by the VA in Rockford, IL for over 25 years.

Hines VA Hospital is the designated Polytrauma Network Site for VISN 12. Polytrauma Network Sites provide specialized, post-acute rehabilitation in consultation with VA's Regional Rehabilitation Centers in a setting appropriate to the needs of Veterans, service members, and families. These Network Sites provide proactive case management for existing and emerging conditions and identify local resources for VA and non-VA care. Hines is currently treating 67 polytrauma Veterans as outpatients and historically has had limited need (less than 10 Veterans) for a transitional residential facility. Also, Hines has screened 382 Veterans with positive evaluations for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and 93 of these patients are actively being followed. The majority of patients have mild TBI's that can be effectively treated in home and community based settings, with less than 12 patients in the moderate to severe category that may require more intensive therapy.

The proposed Warrior Gateway facility identifies Winnebago County as the primary service area with two thirds of the residents coming from this county. Currently,

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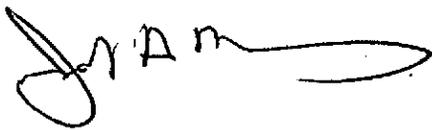
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22% of the 22,569 Veterans residing in Winnebago County are under 45 years old and are in the age cohort identified in the proposal. There are 612 Veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts that have enrolled with the VA for care from Winnebago, Boone and Stephenson Counties. Although there are no specific demand projections for returning Veterans needing residential polytrauma and/or TBI services, it is expected to continue to be a very small number. VISN 12 has planned construction of a 10 bed extended care facility using the THE GREEN HOUSE® concept targeting younger Veterans. This facility will be located at the North Chicago VAMC and will be the primary location for placement of younger Veterans in need of residential polytrauma and/or TBI services for the entire VISN 12 service area. It appears unlikely that there would be adequate Veteran demand to support the proposed 120 bed facility in the Rockford area.

VISN 12 planning and clinical representatives will continue to work with the Warrior Gateway sponsors and other community partners to identify and implement the best care options for Veterans. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on this endeavor for your consideration and planning.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. A. Murawsky". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey A. Murawsky, M.D.
Network Director