



**Joan Patricia Murphy, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET**

DATE 7/25/11  
TO: Mr. Dale Palassio  
Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board  
FAX # 217-785-4111 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM: Cook County Commissioner Joan P. Murphy

This fax contains 3 pages including cover.

If you do not receive all pages, please call (312) 603-4216.

Subject: Project 11-037 Oak Forest Hospital Written Comment

Additional comments:

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**JOAN PATRICIA MURPHY**  
**COMMISSIONER - 6<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

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Capital Improvements  
Labor

**VICE CHAIR**

Real Estate & Business &  
Economic Development  
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**MEMBER**

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July 21, 2011

Mr. Dale Galassie

Chairman

Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board

525 West Jefferson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Springfield, Illinois 62761

**Re: Project 11-037 Oak Forest Hospital, Oak Forest**

Dear Chairman Galassie,

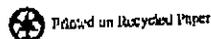
The Cook County Health and Hospitals System is the largest provider of health care to the poor, the uninsured, and the underinsured residents of Cook County. Now there is a plan to close Oak Forest Hospital, the South Suburban extension of the system. Oak Forest Hospital has been in existence for over 80 years and over the years improvements have been made to ensure a high level of in-house patient care as well as specialty programs. Some of these programs are ventilator palliative care, AIDS units, brain injury rehabilitation, and pain management. Other programs include Oncology, maternal fetal medicine and mammography. These services have been established to ensure effective health care is provided to this underserved community, however, now Oak Forest Hospital is in jeopardy of closing. Inpatient care for the South Suburban community will be greatly affected. We come to you with two questions:

1. **Where will these patients go to receive adequate healthcare?**
2. **Are the same programs available at any other hospital in the area?**

According to reports, several area hospitals have weighed in on this topic: Blue Island's MetroSouth, Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, and Ingalls Hospital. The overall consensus from these hospitals is that closing Oak Forest would have an overwhelming impact on their facilities. Blue Island MetroSouth says they will "step up and help those patients in transition" but "one can only do so much." Christ Hospital says "our usual overcrowding would get worse," and Ingalls Hospital

**6<sup>th</sup> District Municipalities**

Alsip, Bedford Park, Bridgeview, Calumet City, Chicago Heights, Chicago Ridge, Crestwood, Dolton, East Hazel Crest, Flossmoor, Ford Heights, Glenwood, Hickory Hills, Homewood, Justice, Lansing, Lynwood, Matteson, Merrionette Park, Midlothian, Oak Forest, Oak Lawn, Orland Park, Palos Heights, Palos Hills, Park Forest, Richton Park, South Chicago Heights, Suak Village, South Holland, Steger, Summit, Thornton, Tinley Park, University Park, Worth



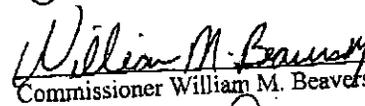


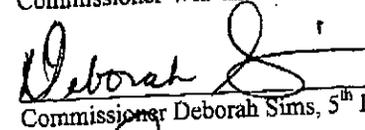
doesn't have enough beds for the patients that they currently see. It is clear that the surrounding hospitals will not be able to carry the burden of Oak Forest patients for the delivery of adequate medical services. So we have to ask again, where will our patients receive health care?

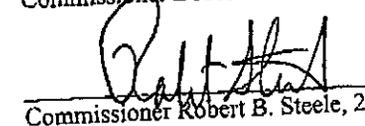
It is the responsibility of the Cook County Board of Commissioners to fund the Health and Hospitals system and that includes Oak Forest Hospital. We are charged with providing cost effective measures and responsible spending to ensure there are funds to provide adequate healthcare to our citizens. If funding is the problem then it is the responsibility of the Cook County Board to correct the problem. Hospital closure is not the solution. Closing Oak Forest will impact more than just patient care, it will also impact the already dramatic unemployment rate of medical staff and other hospital personnel, increase underutilized medical space and cause a host of negative economic consequences. The unemployment rate in Illinois is 9% and in South Suburban Cook County it is 15%. How much more can we handicap this already struggling community? **We totally oppose the closing of Oak Forest Hospital.**

Yours truly,

  
Commissioner Joan Patricia Murphy, 6<sup>th</sup> District

  
Commissioner William M. Beavers, 4<sup>th</sup> District

  
Commissioner Deborah Sims, 5<sup>th</sup> District

  
Commissioner Robert B. Steele, 2<sup>nd</sup> District