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Mr. Dale Galassie
Chairman, Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 West Jefferson, 2nd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Fax# 217-785-4111

*Proposed Vista Medical Center – Lindenhurst
CON Project Number #12-081*

Dear Chairman Galassie,

Lake County United, a non-profit association of 34 faith-based and community organizations is asking the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to withhold its approval of the proposed Vista Medical Center in Lindenhurst, IL, until the Board has received and made public a thorough accounting of Vista's previous commitment to spend \$70 million to improve health care in the Waukegan area, and the Board has conducted and disclosed a comprehensive review of this application's potential impacts on health care access for low-income, minority and traditionally underserved populations, as is required by statute.

Attached you will find a position paper adopted by the Lake County United Steering Committee that outlines our request in more detail.

Our organization is happy to work with the Review Board and Vista to ensure, in the process of seeking to expand access to care in one part of the county, that this proposal does not exacerbate the already serious lack of access to quality care in the Waukegan area. However, until we are satisfied that Vista has lived up to its previous commitment in a collaborative and transparent way, and that this proposal will bring with it real improvements in access to care for all residents of Lake County, our organization cannot support this application and will urge other members of the community to stand with us in this cause.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cristine Pope".

Cristine Pope
Lead Organizer, on behalf of the Steering Team



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cris Pope (708) 369-1676

Lake County United statement regarding proposed CHS hospital in Lindenhurst
Community organization asks state to withhold permit for new hospital until company shows it is living up to its promise to improve care in Waukegan

Waukegan, IL--Lake County United is calling on the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to withhold its approval for Community Health Systems and Vista Health to construct a new hospital in Lake County until the company lives up to public commitments made in conjunction with their reduction of services at St. Therese Hospital in 2007 and shows it has taken meaningful steps to improve access to health care services for the underserved in Waukegan and surrounding communities.

In 2007, when CHS, (the parent company of Vista East), asked for state approval to reduce services at St. Therese Hospital in Waukegan, the company publicly committed to invest \$70 million to advance health care in Waukegan. This commitment was cited by local officials as the basis for their support for the changes requested by CHS. (Application 07-045, submitted March 1, 2007, p. 144)

Since then, there has been no accounting for how, or even if, that investment has been made. While the organization believes in overall improved access to care, it cannot support a new hospital while the needs of so many residents remain unmet. Lake County United supports improved access to care and improved health care facilities everywhere, but not if such development results in exacerbating the lack of care for lower income families. Lake County United is calling on the state to demand a full accounting of how CHS intends to meet that obligation, to urge a collaborative and transparent process, and for the Board to abide by its statutory requirement to assess the impacts of this application on underserved populations who rely on safety net health care providers.

Lake County United, a coalition of faith-based and non-profit community organizations, is calling on the Health Facilities Review Board to delay its consideration of the CHS application for a new hospital until the company can show it is living up to its prior commitment and that the project will not have a detrimental impact on safety net health care services in Lake County. The organization is specifically requesting that CHS/Vista East:

- Provide an accounting of their investment thus far towards the \$70 million commitment made in 2007
- Present a plan for future investments to fulfill the commitment and a process to include community input and transparency
- Conduct a community health needs assessment in order to identify health concerns and assist residents and organizations in setting priorities for community health
- Provide a comprehensive public report on the services currently available at Vista East and how those services will be impacted by the construction of a new Lindenhurst hospital



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- Provide a comprehensive public report on how this application will protect timely and affordable access to care for traditionally underserved populations particularly in eastern Lake County

Lake County United looks forward to viewing this information and engaging in a productive collaboration with CHS and other community organizations to address local needs and to enhance access to quality care among the underserved, uninsured and low-income residents in the Waukegan area.

Lake County United is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of 34 civil society institutions: Churches, synagogues, mosques, civic and labor groups. Formed in April of 2003 our member organizations commit both dues and leaders (based on their size) to work for a just society through active citizenship. Our membership is growing and is open to all who share our goals.

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