



**HSHS**  
**St. Joseph's**  
**Hospital | Highland**

September 1, 2020

Courtney Avery  
 Administrator  
 Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board  
 525 W. Jefferson Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Springfield, IL 62761  
[Courtney.Avery@Illinois.gov](mailto:Courtney.Avery@Illinois.gov)

**RECEIVED**

SEP 01 2020

HEALTH FACILITIES &  
 SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Re: Opposition to CON Application #20-017 – Metroeast Surgery Center

Dear Ms. Avery:

My name is Tricia Buehne and I have been working in Highland for almost 23 years at First Mid Bank & Trust. I started as a part time teller and moved up the ladder at the bank; I am now the Vice President. I have been involved in the community since I have worked at the bank, Highland is huge on supporting their community and everyone works together. I am also the President of the Highland Chamber of Commerce, member of the Highland Rotary and a member of the Highland Jaycees (JCI Highland). Last year I served as the National President of JCI USA, I was privileged to be able to travel all across the US and World representing our country. With that being said, everywhere I traveled I would always speak of Highland, IL. Highland is a very unique community that all work together from the City to the Chamber to the Police/Fire Departments to the School to the Hospital and to the Local Organizations we all work together to make Highland the best place to live, work and play. In Highland we promote our people to move forward to see them all succeed, just like I did at the bank. As a Board Member of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital (SJH) Highland, I respectfully oppose this CON application and urge its denial.

In this CON application, Metroeast Endoscopic Surgery Center (MESCC), located in Fairview Heights, proposes to add orthopedic surgery services to its existing surgery center by redirecting 200 surgeries annually from SJH, and another 20 surgeries each year from St. Joseph's Hospital Breese. At both hospitals, these redirected surgical cases will adversely impact surgical utilization (which are already below state standards) and reduce marginal revenue at a time when they have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated state orders to suspend and limit elective procedures. In so doing, this CON project would unnecessarily duplicate existing services and adversely impact a Critical Access Hospital.

SJH is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital, a CMS designation for rural hospitals that have 25 or fewer beds and are either located more than 35 miles from another hospital or designated by IDPH as a "Necessary Provider." By adversely impacting a Critical Access Hospital, this CON project will diminish safety net services in the area – contrary to the core goals of the Planning Act. The 200 redirected procedures represent all orthopedic surgeries and more than 15 percent of total outpatient volume at SJH. That translates into a reduction of \$1.7 million in net hospital revenue, and a loss of \$616,000 in margin – which will negate our hospital's ability to provide charity care and to cross-subsidize other services, such as the Emergency Department. For context, SJH's charity care from outpatient services totals \$640,937, while MESCC reports zero dollars in charity care on over \$2.3 million in net patient revenue (CON application, p.98). For these and other reasons, I respectfully urge the Review Board to deny this CON application.

Sincerely,  
  
 Tricia Buehne

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