GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE OF ILLINOIS

August 14, 2019

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Gov. Pritzker,

We write today as four members of the Illinois General Assembly who are deeply concerned with the extensive negative impact the impending closure of the MetroSouth Hospital Facility in Blue Island, IL would have on the communities we represent.

At a recent Public Hearing of the Health Facilities and Services Review Board; the Board, staff and administration heard from more than a hundred people about the vital need for this facility to remain operational. Some were doctors and nurses who outlined the consistent high-value care they administer every day. Others were local residents who have relied on this hospital for decades as the primary means of health care access for their family. We heard from first responders who warned of the dangers of extended ambulance ride times if the facility closes, and we heard from former patients who may not have even been standing there if they didn't have quick access to emergency care in the past.

Perhaps most concerning is we heard from many people that make us believe that MetroSouth and their parent company Quorum Health have not behaved as honest brokers throughout this process. As you know, we recently completed one of the more productive legislative sessions in recent history. During that process, the General Assembly and your administration took action to provide relief to struggling hospitals. Throughout that entire process, not once did any of us receive a phone call, letter or email from MetroSouth executives informing us of their financial situation or pleading for help. Seeing as we all care deeply about keeping this hospital open, if that call had come, we would have responded. Even legislators who sit on the MetroSouth board were never informed or called upon to assist.

We have heard a great deal from community leaders, former administrators and current employees about many of the decisions happening at all levels of MetroSouth's operations the past two years and they paint a picture of a for-profit hospital trying to cut and run from their commitments so they can pad the bottom-line of their share-holders, all while putting local lives at risk. This is unacceptable.

As of today, the HFSRB agenda for the September 17, 2019 meeting in Bolingbrook includes a pending item on the consideration of MetroSouth's exemption petition. We ask that you and your office intervene to postpone this item and give our community time to work on potential long-term solutions. As you know, if the Certificate of Need is allowed to expire on this facility, it will be a large empty economic crater in our community for decades to come.

We remain confident that by working together we can find a solution that allows the facility to keep operating and saving lives in our region while also transforming into a modern health care asset that fits the needs of the community. We are not pleased with the actions of MetroSouth or Quorum, but we are more concerned about the next 20 years than the last two. We remain ready to work with all partners to find a solution but we need time, and time can only come by delaying a final decision on MetroSouth to at least the end of the 2019 calendar year. We ask that you consider our request in name of the nearly 50,000 people who rely on emergency care at this facility every year and the hundreds of thousands more that will rely on it beyond September. We would also request a face-to-face meeting with you and members of your administration in the near future so that we can discuss in detail strategies to save this hospital. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Rita
Representative, 28th District

Emil Jones III
Senator, 14th District

William Q. Davis
Representative, 30th District

Justin Q. Slaughter
State Representative, 27th District

Cc: The Honorable Deanna Demuzio
Ms. Barbara Hemme
Ms. Sandra Martell
Ms. Debra Savage
Ms. Linda Rae Murray
Mr. Richard Sewell
Ms. Courtney Avery