Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

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July 2, 2019

Courtney Avery, Administrator
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson, Second Floor
Springfield, IIL 62761

Dear Administrator Avery,

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) and Swedish Covenant Hospital (SCH) have partnered for over 30 years, helping patients get the services and supports they need in the community. Through LSSI's Project Impact, Mental Health and Substance Abuse crisis counselors from LSSI are embedded in the SCH emergency department. These on-site counselors provide 24/7 in-depth assessment for Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse, and referrals for additional treatment and/or resources, as needed.

In addition, LSSI's Welcoming Center is an open-access Behavioral Health outpatient setting located on the Swedish Covenant Hospital (SCH) Campus, steps from the Emergency Room (ER). Behavioral Health patients will cycle back to the ER if they are not connected to an open-access model where clients are welcomed, can drop in when they need help, and return for ongoing counseling, case management, and medication services. The Welcoming Center provides easy access to a multi-disciplinary team of Behavioral Health professionals, all at an outpatient rate, as compared to the expense of hospitalization. This Model decreases the utilization of the ER for Behavioral Health treatment, and thereby improves client outcomes and quality while decreasing the total cost of healthcare.

Knowing SCH as a close partner in serving Chicago's Northside community, with confidence I support the affiliation of the Hospital with NorthShore University HealthSystem. NorthShore and Swedish Covenant Hospital together will expand access and enhance delivery of top quality healthcare services in Chicagoland. The two organizations have a common vision and purpose and a combined 260-year tradition of delivering outstanding patient care and outcomes across diverse urban and suburban neighborhoods.

Swedish Covenant Hospital has a long history of serving our community, the most diverse community in the city of Chicago and of being Chicago's largest employer on the Northside. Like the community it serves, SCH is committed to serving its patient population which reflects this diversity in ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, age and country of origin.

NorthShore University HealthSystem has embraced this commitment and has made associated commitments. Through the Swedish Covenant Foundation, the organizations will continue to support vulnerable populations (e.g., violence prevention, housing for the homeless, dental clinic) to preserve health and invest in expanding healthcare for the residents in our community and beyond for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Mark Stutrud
President and CEO