William Rose
9th Ward Alderman-City of Rockford
Planning and Development Chair
425 E. State St.
Rockford, IL 61104

ROCKFORD
RECEIVED
JUL 15 2020
HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board:

As you are aware that Rockton Campus Javon Bea Hospital is applying for an exemption application that was submitted July 2nd, I would like to share my sentiment for the health services board to hold a Public Hearing in regards to this applied exemption. The reason I believe we need a public hearing is because our community has seen consistent reductions over the years with regard to mental illness and wellbeing that we can no longer ignore the plight of those suffering on our most vulnerable side of town. Reductions first occurred when the state no longer funded the facility known as Singer Mental Health. Community programs and non-profits also began to shore-up resources as funding for these services were discontinued through grant programs. As time has gone on, Rockford's westside area mental health services has declined due to the fact that we often criminalize mental health in our community. Our police have taken on a majority of the mental health issues in our neighborhoods, totally intervening (with good intentions), but not being able to offer real solutions for those assisting or providing housing and care for those with the most need.

Currently Winnebago County just passed a referendum collecting tax dollars around the mental health issues facing our community, all the while they are collecting data around mental health. This team of doctors, mental health professionals and counselors are conducting an environmental scan of the entire county reaching out to over 150 stakeholder groups to discover where our gaps are with regard to mental health services. This environmental scan will be integral in how our hospitals, non-for-profits and social services play a role in the formation of goals around mental health. In my short experience as an area alderman, our police, fire, EMT and school professionals from around the community are essentially doing their best to respond to mental health issues in our neighborhoods. They are not mental health professionals with medical training though, and because of this, we need hospitals to offer the proper amount of beds and services where people can go to get the help they need. This piece of the puzzle includes Javon Bea Rockton Campus. We cannot expect our mental health needs to reduce especially during a pandemic. And we cannot lose these vital resources due to the fact that Javon Bea wants to conduct their non-for-

profit hospital strikingly similar to a for-profit institution. They serve the community and the need is here for these services to continue. I not only believe these services are necessary for the success of our community, I would hope that the state health board would regularly check in on the level of service they are providing. On a few occasions I have heard of mentally unstable patients being denied service as they were told there were not enough beds to service the patient. If there are not enough beds for service, then how does Javon Bea Hospital make the argument that their levels of service have declined significantly? I don't know the answer, but I know their services are desperately needed.

I urge this body to ensure that our citizens have access to these key services for two reasons. We are still facing a pandemic and our mental health needs I believe will continue to rise due to this unfortunate event. Secondly, please allow our county mental health committee to complete their mental health environmental scan that will be completed by October of 2020 to determine if the need is real, or if Javon Bea Hospital is fulfilling the community need for these services. More information never hurt and I believe it is extremely important that our state board have all the information they need before making a decision that would significantly impact the work of those on the frontlines (police, fire, EMTs, counselors, social workers and educators)

Sincerely,

William Rose

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