Courtney Avery, Administrator

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board

525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor

Springfield, IL 62761

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JUL 16 2020
HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

I request a Public Hearing regarding the application for exemption to discontinue a 20-bed acute mental illness category of service at Javon Bea Hospital – Rockton Avenue (#E-032-20).

Community mental health advocates and local legislators came together to discuss the issue right away. The application states that there is an insufficient patient census for the continued operation of an inpatient acute mental illness category of service at the Javon Bea Hospital, averaging at "2-3 patients per day". It was also published by our local news here: https://www.wifr.com/2020/07/06/mercyhealth-petitions-to-dismantle-mental-illness-ward/. Additional to professional observations, if you look through the application itself, those numbers are clearly erroneous as the average daily census remains, on average, between 9 – 10 patients through 2018. 2019 data was not included in the application. One example:

Acute Mental Illness Services at Mercyhealth 2018 (pulled from application https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/hfsrb/Projects/ProjectDocuments/Exempt/E-032-20/2020-07-01%20E-032-20%20Exemption%20Application.pdf)

- *14 peak beds*
- *593 admissions*
- *3,521 inpatient days*
- *5.9 day average stay*
- *Average daily census 9.6*

Psychiatric hospitalization is often a last resort option for individuals with acute mental illness. Once hospitalized, individuals can be monitored closely, accurately diagnosed, monitored, and stabilized.

Numbers of psychiatric beds continue to fall throughout the nation. Without access to hospital care, individuals with serious mental illness deteriorate, families crumble under stress, emergency rooms and jail cells fill to the brims, and first responders find themselves increasingly preoccupied with mental health calls.

On October 31, 2012 Singer Mental Health Center closed their doors and the community lost 47 public, adult beds. Its closing has privatized mental health care. By privatizing, patients are denied critical services because of the lack of insurance coverage. Profits and profitability now dictate whether someone can receive care. Javon Bea Hospital is seeking to break its promise to this community to provide comprehensive inpatient care to those most in need. Our community deserves to be heard before any decision is made to allow the reduction of services.

Untreated mental illness is a glaring issue in our community and our residents deserve more resources, not fewer. Psychiatric bed shortages impact us all.

Sincerely,

John W. Herring

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