Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

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HEALTH FACILITIES &
SERVICES REVIEW BOARD

July 13, 2020

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/. In addition to professional observations, when one looks through the application itself, those aforementioned numbers are clearly falsified 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 or chronic serious mental illness who need thorough, inpatient care. 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, seriously ill individuals deteriorate, families and caregivers crumble under stress, emergency rooms and jail cells fill to the brims, and first responders find themselves increasingly preoccupied with mental health calls.

Mental illness is a glaring issue in our community and our residents deserve more resources, not fewer. Psychiatric bed shortages affect everyone.

Sincerely,

Xavier Whitford
Tommy Corral Memorial Foundation