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Commissioner – 13th District
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and Training Committee
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Committee

April 18, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the application of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) to discontinue the current 213 bed in-patient facility with an average daily census under 60 patients; and replace it with a state of the art outpatient facility that would treat many more patients.

I am the elected Cook County Commissioner from the 13th District representing 320,000 residents of Cook County. Since my election in 2002 I have been very involved in the operation and management of CCHHS. I was the principal sponsor of the ordinance which created the current Independent Board. As Chair of the County Board's Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee I have worked closely with CCHHS to navigate the fast changing federal and state laws and rules for running and financing health care.

The Strategic Planning Process was one of the most complete ever attempted by a public body. The process included many small and large meetings of stakeholders and a significant number of public hearings throughout the County. In addition the Cook County Board conducted its own hearings independent of the CCHHS. The process led to the proposal before you which would allow us to better serve patient visits to the urgent/immediate care center at Oak Forest. Up to 29,000 patient visits are expected in the first year of the Strategic Plan with significant additional patients coming as new facilities and certificate of need are finished and obtained.

The current in-patient census is a very small portion of the Emergency Department visits and reflects the nature of the illnesses that are currently presented.

The Cook County Board approved the Strategic Plan including the request currently before your Board. The plan was approved because we saw that precious resources were not being used to the maximum to insure care to more people in the Southland. This plan was developed to expand the number of patients and services that could be made available at Oak Forest by changing the delivery system.

The request before you is an opportunity to expand the services available and to improve the quality of services. For too long this facility with its many building structures has had more buildings than actual in-patients on any given day.

The plan for redeployment of Oak Forest will bring in more patients who will see more efficient treatment. The Cook County Board has voted on a number of occasions to fully fund the CCHS Strategic Plan. The resources to create a new model of health care delivery are now available.

To deny this request is to continue to limit the number of in-patients to an under 60 patient census and to limit our ability to treat more patients by better use of public resources.

The 13th District includes the following communities
49th & 50th Wards of the City of Chicago, the City of Evanston and the Villages of Glencoe, Glenview, Kenilworth,
Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Northbrook, Skokie, Wilmette, and Winnetka



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