

June 20, 2022

Minnesota Department of Health
625 Robert Street North
P.O.Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Dear Mr. Gildemeister:

Thank you for the opportunity to present during the public comment meeting on Thursday, June 9, 2022, regarding Fairview's partnership with Acadia Healthcare to build a new 144-bed inpatient mental health and addiction hospital in St. Paul. We are grateful for the Minnesota Department of Health's leadership of this public interest review process and thank you for creating a space where community members comments can be voiced and heard.

In carefully considering comments from meeting attendees, we believe nearly all of the topics raised have been previously addressed in documents submitted to the department as part of our public interest review application. However, thank you for the opportunity to reaffirm information in two areas:

First, we wish to address the suggestion that the plans for the new hospital to operate as a mental health and addiction hospital would leave patients with complex medical needs, in addition to their psychiatric conditions, unable to receive suitable care. This will most certainly not be the case. Today, Fairview treats some of our community's most underserved populations with some of the greatest and most complex health needs. This new hospital will enhance our ability to do so by helping people get the care they need, and deserve, faster. The new hospital will be fully integrated and designed to care for patients' whole health. Psychiatrists, certified nurse practitioners and internal medicine doctors will be fully equipped to manage patients' medical needs while they receive the specialized acute psychiatric care they need. No matter where a patient seeks care across our system, they will be evaluated and admitted to the best possible psychiatric and medical setting, based on their needs, not on preference for payor nor their condition. This is an important benefit of establishing this new hospital inside Fairview's already integrated mental health and addiction care services.

Second, shared comments speculated regarding plans by Fairview to change operations at M Health Fairview University of Minnesota Medical Center (UMMC) located on Riverside Avenue in Minneapolis. UMMC operates more inpatient mental health beds than any tertiary or quaternary care hospital in the state. Inpatient mental health and addiction units at UMMC play a critical role in our system's delivery of inpatient mental health care, as they will continue to. The new mental health hospital will have a complimentary impact on the operations of existing inpatient mental



health units in our system. In fact, the only net impact will be to help hospitals like UMMC and other metro hospitals – to improve patient flow and reduce wait times for people in need of inpatient mental health care.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that this new hospital is one critical step in strengthening our state’s entire system of mental health and addiction care. Fairview is the largest provider of mental health and addiction care in the Upper Midwest. From this vantage point, we see the many ways in which our system of mental health care must continuously reform to ensure that we both meet the needs of patients today but well into the future. For years, we’ve collaborated with partners in St. Paul, the Twin Cities and across the entire state to meet our communities’ most urgent health crises – including access to mental health and addiction care. The need for innovation and new approaches in solving such persistent and urgent crises as this cannot be overstated. We continue to feel strongly that this 144-bed hospital will play a critical role in helping make Minnesota a leader in delivering the highest quality mental health care for patients across the state.

Thank you for your continued consideration.



Sincerely,
Laura Reed

