

# Comment on Proposed Fairview Health Services - Acadia Healthcare Mental Health Hospital

Date, Time:

6/23/2022 1:11:58 PM

Name:

Roland Hayes

Where do you live:

Shoreview

Do you represent an organization?

No

What organization do you represent?

What is your comment on the proposed mental health hospital?

June 23, 2022

Jan Malcolm, Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Health

P.O. Box 64975

St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Dear Commissioner Malcolm,

I am a retired ELCA Lutheran pastor who served for thirty-eight years at St. Michael's Lutheran in Roseville. During my time in the parish, I was asked to provide counsel and support for a number of members struggling with mental health issues and addiction. Many responded well to the outpatient services that were available to them. Some were fortunate to receive the inpatient care they needed. But there were others, too many others, that were not able to access appropriate inpatient care in the community. Several ended up at facilities hundreds of miles away which added to their distress as well as that of their families. And there was one occasion where the lack of timely access to needed inpatient care ended with the person tragically taking his own life.

I also served on the board of Health East Care system for sixteen years. There were countless times when we were confronted with need to address the growing challenge of providing appropriate care for people dealing with mental health issues and addiction...especially those who needed inpatient treatment. We heard of people spending days in the Emergency Room because it was unsafe to release them but there were no available beds to be found. We authorized building out "holding" rooms that would free-up the Emergency Room space while people waited for an inpatient bed to open. At every turn we sought to find appropriate, cost-effective ways to expand existing services and facilities to address the health and well-being of a growing number of people. But to do so required more.

Based on these experiences, and continued conversations with folks who currently provide care to

people with mental illness and addiction, I fully support Fairview's proposal to build a dedicated mental health hospital. I am convinced that it will be a significant and vital step in effectively meeting the critical needs of community members for whom inpatient care is necessary yet too often unavailable.

I would, therefore, ask that you provide the necessary approval for this new facility. In doing so you will be expanding hope, healing and creating the opportunity for a new-life for countless people today and for years to come.

Sincerely,

Roland L. Hayes, Pastor