

Dear Governor Quinn:

As elected officials representing the Southland area served by the Tinley Park Mental Health Center, including South Cook, Will, Grundy and Kankakee Counties as well as the South Side of Chicago, we are greatly disturbed by the proposed closing of the center.

Tinley Park MHC is the only public psychiatric hospital in the region, a unique resource and an integral part of the mental health system. Its services cannot be replaced, especially at a time when state support for community health services has been cut by \$32 million and private hospitals in the area are closing their inpatient mental health programs. These are among the reasons that admissions at Tinley Park MHC have been rising—up 9 percent since 2006. The center treated some 2,000 patients last year.

It is also why the broad array of mental health advocates and providers in the State of Illinois Mental Health Summit called the closure “illegal, unwise and inhumane” and why it is opposed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Illinois. And it is why the Illinois Department of Human Services’ own Metro South Mental Health Planning Task Force—in which many of us participated—called for maintaining a public hospital in the region. Yet DHS proposes no replacement for Tinley Park MHC and the services it provides.

The closure will also have a significant impact on the region’s already severe unemployment problem. According to the department’s own analysis, 207 employees at the Tinley Park Mental Health Center would lose their jobs, resulting in \$50.5 million in lost economic activity and a further loss of 158 additional jobs to the local economy.

We realize that additional funds will have to be appropriated to maintain Tinley Park MHC in the current budget year, and pledge to work with you to help accomplish that task. We urge you to halt plans to close the center and instead work with us to assure that its vitally necessary mental health services will continue to be available in our region.

Sincerely,

SENATOR MAGGIE CROTTY
SENATOR TOI W. HUTCHINSON
SENATOR EDWARD D. MALONEY
SENATOR DONNE E. TROTTER
SENATOR A.J. WILHELMI
REP. BILL CUNNINGHAM
REP. MONIQUE DAVIS
REP. WILLIAM DAVIS
REP. CONSTANCE A. HOWARD

REP. MARY E. FLOWERS
REP. THADDEUS JONES
REP. JACK MCGUIRE
REP. AL RILEY
COMMISSIONER JOAN PATRICIA MURPHY
COMMISSIONER EDWIN REYES
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH SIMS
COMMISSIONER ROBERT STEELE
COMMISSIONER LARRY SUFFREDIN