

January 15, 2021

Itasca Plan Commission
Village of Itasca
550 W. Irving Park Road
Itasca, Illinois 60143

Dear Sir or Madam,

As one of the top 10 health systems in the country, Advocate Aurora Health serves more than 3 million unique patients. Our dedication to the health and safety of our communities is what motivates us to write to you today in strong support of Haymarket Center's proposal to open an addiction treatment center in Itasca, Illinois.

The unprecedented levels of uncertainty, instability and social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic have added fuel to the addiction crisis. Early numbers just released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are chilling: 2020 is on track to see a 40% spike in overdose deaths. No community is immune from this crisis, including Itasca and DuPage County. In fact, as you may know, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported an increase in overdose deaths to 70 during the first six months of 2020, compared with 46 during the same period the year before.

It is time for all of us to stand together to find solutions. The DuPage County HOPE Task Force, which is tasked with addressing the opioid crisis, identified among its goals expanding access to Medication-Assisted Treatment, increasing treatment community capacity, promoting integration of mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and promoting job training and workforce development programs.

Haymarket Center's proposed treatment center in Itasca will address each of those goals and even more. As one of our region's largest and most comprehensive providers of treatment for substance use disorders and mental health conditions, their team of dedicated health care professionals have an excellent reputation earned through decades of providing evidence-based treatment to Chicago's underserved populations, regardless of their ability to pay.

Bringing their expertise and full continuum of health care services to Itasca should be welcomed, even celebrated. This is a health care crisis. How many lives could have been saved if this process had not taken so long? It is time to put stigma aside and begin the essential work of helping our friends, family and neighbors get well.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renee Donaldson".

Renee Donaldson
VP Operations, IL Behavioral Health, Behavioral Health Service Line
Advocate Aurora Health