

## Editorial: Rehab agency deserves fair hearing for proposed Itasca facility

Daily Herald Editorial Board  
June 20, 2019

We spoke in favor of a nonprofit group's proposal 18 months ago to open a drug and alcohol treatment center in Wheaton, but its rejection in the face of community opposition might prove to have been fortunate.

That's because a plan rolled out this week would house more patients in a much larger building in Itasca and includes space for those transitioning out of inpatient treatment.

There's little doubt the suburbs need more places that treat, supervise and support addicts seeking to break the grip of drug abuse. In DuPage County alone, more than 300 people have died of a drug overdose since 2015 and more than 600 have been treated with naloxone, a drug that counters opioid overdoses and prevents deaths. Nationally, deaths are projected to more than double by 2025 compared to 2015, a study in the February Journal of the American Medical Association projects, with treatment one prong in the effort to hasten reversal of the trend.

The Haymarket Center apparently learned from its experience in Wheaton, where the city council ultimately voted down the plan. This time, Haymarket lined up an impressive list of supporters led by DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin, who has been out in front on addressing opioids' toll. Haymarket expects to formally present plans to Itasca officials next month.

Haymarket aims to take over a Holiday Inn on the west side of I-290 at Irving Park Road and convert it into a roughly 200-bed facility. It would provide inpatient and outpatient care and have beds for treatment and recovery. The hotel site seems nearly ideal. Located in an industrial area, it's closer to a police station than to homes, potentially muting one source of opposition that arose in Wheaton. Though purchase of the hotel by the nonprofit would remove it from the tax rolls, Haymarket would bring 162 jobs to the community.

Backers anticipate they'll have to be persuasive. As Cronin says, "When people first hear about a heroin treatment facility in their town, the initial reaction of most people -- knowing human nature -- is that they're going to be opposed to it."

Yet, those who need treatment are our children, neighbors, co-workers, friends. We urge Itasca officials and residents to remember that, and to evaluate Haymarket's proposal with open minds and level heads.

Haymarket Center's CEO Dan Lustig says thousands of suburban residents have been treated at the Haymarket Center in Chicago. But drug abuse is a significant problem in our suburbs. Treatment should be widely available here, too.

# Chicago Tribune

## Column: Would you support an opioid addiction treatment center in your neighborhood? Drug crisis calls for real solutions.

By: Kristen McQueary  
September 16, 2019

In the grip of a national opioid crisis that has been destroying families and driving up the cost of health care, controversy over an addiction facility is unfolding in west suburban Itasca.

Residents of the 8,600-plus village are aggressively fighting a proposal to allow a drug treatment center to open in an up-for-sale Holiday Inn. The hotel is confined within a business park off Interstate 290, a way from residences. Introduced by Haymarket Center, which is headquartered in Chicago's West Loop, the facility would provide in-patient treatment for drug addiction aimed at suburban residents on Medicaid.

Opposition in Itasca has been pronounced. But the "No Haymarket" signs poking from lawns around town are symbols of fear, not fact. Residents worry the facility will damage their community. The reality is, the opioid epidemic already has.

No town, no city, no region, no state, no demographic — no taxpayer — has been protected from the reach of the opioid crisis. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that between 1999 and 2017 more than 702,000 people died from overdoses. In 2017, it was the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. The victims are your mothers, brothers, cousins, neighbors, children.

Nationally, the response to the opioid crisis has been a slow awakening. Only in recent years has law enforcement taken more seriously predatory and fraudulent prescription practices among doctors and pharmacies. Under President Donald Trump, the federal government is releasing more funding for data collection and addiction services. And many first responders across the country now are equipped with overdose medication that has saved thousands of lives.

Purdue Pharma, maker of the popular painkiller OxyContin, filed for bankruptcy Sunday, the first step toward settling thousands of lawsuits related to the opioid crisis.

But then what? Addicts who survive an overdose, or live with their addictions, face waiting lists and few treatment options for long-term success. Haymarket Center, despite its sturdy reputation in the addiction space, struggles to find host communities. In Itasca, during community meetings and outreach, the nonprofit adequately addressed concerns about lost tax revenue, public safety and emergency response capabilities. This is a privately owned hotel attempting to sell to a private nonprofit.

But at the end of the day, Haymarket can't resolve the overarching resistance of NIMBY, or not in my backyard.

Rosecrance, another in-patient drug treatment facility network, faced similar backlash when it opened a location in Lakeview, one of Chicago's more upscale neighborhoods, in 2016. Residents resisted fiercely. But the treatment center opened anyway, and the bulk of complaints since then have been about cigarette smoking near the building. That's it.

The debate comes down to this: Are we focused on broad solutions or on micro self-interest? Do we care about addressing the epidemic of opioid addiction or just gawking at overdose videos on YouTube? Do we want more government spending on emergency calls and incarceration of nonviolent offenders? Or do we trust an experienced provider to oversee what is essentially a sober living facility, probably less disruptive than a corner gas station?

The Itasca Village Board is expected to make a final decision on the Haymarket proposal next month. There's no question members of the board will be under rigorous pressure to reject it. It would be easy to do so. But what's easy is not always what's right.

# Daily Herald

Suburban Chicago's Information Source

## Opposition to rehab proposal is disappointing

September 18, 2019

Letter to the Editor – Felicia Miceli

Haymarket Center, a well-respected treatment facility, wants to open a new location in Itasca to address the opioid crisis in DuPage County. We strongly support the project, and it has been disappointing to see the intense community backlash.

Every red sign is a reminder that our loved ones are gone. For people struggling with addiction and their families, the opposition has felt like a personal attack.

Having just gathered for Overdose Awareness Day with hundreds of our neighbors at a vigil in Bloomingdale, I can honestly tell you there is support for this project in our communities. But the stigma surrounding addiction is so pervasive and fear of retaliation is so great that people are afraid to come forward.

Those opposed say they know treatment is needed, but they don't think Itasca is the right place. That's what the residents in Wheaton said, too. And the next town, and the next town, and on and on.

Let me share my personal experience. Recently, a young man sought my help getting into a drug rehabilitation center. He lived in Itasca and did not have private insurance. I made multiple inquiries but the only place that had an open bed for him was Haymarket in Chicago. I can't say for certain that this will be his last visit to a rehab facility, but for now he is getting the treatment he needs.

This treatment center may not win the zoning change it seeks. But ultimately, we are the ones who will lose. It's not "those people" who are struggling to overcome addiction. It's our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, spouses, neighbors and friends. Without more help nearby, more people will die.

Felicia Miceli, President

# Your Views

## A call to action on mental illness

“Fifty-eight years ago, my uncle, John F. Kennedy, challenged the American people to “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Over the course of my life, I have asked myself this question repeatedly, but never has his challenge been more poignant than today.

Our society is steeped in political conflict and social tension. It is impossible to ignore the emotional anguish that breaks the bonds of human connection and cuts deep divides between people from all walks of life. Skyrocketing rates of suicides and overdoses are ending the lives of our brothers and sisters far too early, leaving traumatized families behind to pick up the pieces and face a new normal.

Mental illnesses and addiction are diseases of the brain that can foster hopelessness and despair. On top of this, people often have to fight social stigma and discrimination. The good news is that recovery from mental illnesses and addiction is possible.

For this reason and more, I support the expansion of Haymarket Center’s lifesaving, nationally known evidence-based services to DuPage County. The simple truth is there are far more people afflicted with a substance use disorder than treatment facilities have room to care for. Until we address this shortage, our nation’s mental health crisis will continue to worsen.

Across the country, I hear similar concerns arise when residents are grappling with whether to allow an addiction treatment center to open in their town. I urge the good people of Itasca to find common ground and walk the walk for those with mental health and addiction challenges. If this crisis hasn’t yet affected your family, chances are, it will. This is your call to action. How will you answer?

Former U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy  
Founder of The Kennedy Forum and  
Co-Chair of “Mental Health for US”

## Community should support rehab project

November 14, 2019

As a graduate student of social work, I am a huge advocate of issues surrounding substance abuse. As of 2018, 20.3 million people who are 12 and older have a substance use disorder. Substance abuse affects our friends, family, co-workers and community members.

I know that many people in the community are concerned with the proposal to turn the Holiday Inn in Itasca into Haymarket DuPage rehab center. The main concern is the fact that Itasca's police and emergency services would not be able to serve a facility this large. But, look at the bigger picture. Substance abuse has a massive negative impact on individuals, their families and friends and even their communities.

As a member of a community near Itasca, I know I would want to support and provide care for my other community members. If I were struggling with substance abuse, I would hope that my community would have such a resource.

If the main concern is the demand on Itasca's emergency services, then maybe a smart compromise would be to not use all of the rooms in the old Holiday Inn as beds. Instead of 240 beds, maybe Haymarket could cut that amount in half. That way, we would still be able to serve a large percentage of the community.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Haymarket is proposing to have its own private ambulance service. Also, Haymarket is not just an inpatient facility. They have many other treatment services offered that wouldn't necessarily require emergency services to be called.

The main reason we have emergency services is to provide help to those in the community. If Haymarket wants to provide support to those who struggle with substance abuse in the community, then shouldn't the emergency services be supportive of their community members as well?

Rachel Nicholson Schaumburg