



OFFICERS

Chairman
Harry Wolin
Havana

Chair-Elect
Patrick Magoon
Chicago

Immediate Past Chairman
James Skogsbergh
Oak Brook

Treasurer
Gary Kaatz
Rockford

Secretary
Connie Schroeder
Pittsfield

President
Kenneth Robbins
Naperville

TRUSTEES

John Bennett
Shelbyville

Jeffrey Brickman
Joliet

Alan Channing
Chicago

Edgar Curtis
Springfield

Randall Dauby
McLeansboro

Steve Drucker
Chicago

Michael Eesley
Crystal Lake

Dean Harrison
Chicago

David Hefner
Chicago

William Huff
DuQuoin

Brian Lemon
Berwyn

James Leonard, M.D.
Urbana

Barbara Martin
Waukegan

Michael McManus
Centerville

Nancy Newby
Nashville

Michael O'Grady
Chicago

Keith Page
Maryville

Kevin Poorten
DeKalb

David Schertz
Rockford

Keith Steffen
Peoria

Mark Weber
Alton

June 8, 2009

The Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor of the State of Illinois
207 Statehouse
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn,

The Illinois Hospital Association, on behalf of our 200 member hospitals and health systems throughout the state, respectfully asks that you sign **Senate Bill 1905** to reform and extend the Certificate of Need (CON) Program. We urge your prompt approval of this legislation as soon as you receive it because the program is currently scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2009.

SB1905 is based on the recommendations of a bipartisan, blue ribbon task force. Composed of legislators, consumer advocates, union representatives, civic leaders, and health policy experts, this task force studied the program for a year, talked to leading state and national health experts, and conducted a very thoughtful and deliberative process to develop the best public policy. In addition, the bill was amended to reflect your staff's input and your concerns to remove a special nominations panel from the CON Board appointment process, which we believe improves the legislation.

SB1905 provides for comprehensive reforms of the CON program to ensure streamlined and coordinated planning of new health care services and construction. It also establishes a process, through a new center, that will promote access to health care in all areas of the state. The state needs the health planning process to help ensure that health care services are available wherever they are needed in Illinois, including fast-growing suburban areas, inner-city neighborhoods, and rural areas, and not left to the vagaries and chance of unfettered competition.

Without the health planning program, Illinois would become the target for entrepreneurial specialty facilities and other limited-service providers who would sweep in and skim off the best insured and least complex patients – which has happened in states without a Certificate of Need program. Full-service, community hospitals would be left with the sickest and poorest patients, jeopardizing their financial survival and, most importantly, their communities' access to essential but unprofitable health care services, such as emergency, trauma, perinatal, and behavioral health services.

A properly functioning health planning process provides protections against a dysfunctional, wide-open, profit-driven market. Just look at what unregulated greed has done to our country's banking and housing markets. Some might argue that the health planning process discourages competition. But health care is heavily regulated, and

programs like Medicaid and Medicare, without any negotiation or bargaining, determine how much hospitals and doctors are paid for treating millions of people each year.

A key part of **SB1905** establishes the Center for Comprehensive Health Planning. The Center will develop a statewide plan to address our state's current and future health care needs, plan for public health emergencies such as a swine flu epidemic, and meet the challenge of having enough doctors, nurses and other health care professionals.

Finally, it is important to note that most of the expenses of the CON program are covered by fees paid by CON applicants and that the Health Facilities Planning fund has a substantial surplus (more than \$3.8 million as of June 8, 2009 according to the Illinois Comptroller's Office).

Given the extremely short time remaining before the current July 1, 2009 sunset of the CON program, it is imperative that you act expeditiously on this important legislation. Therefore, the Illinois Hospital Association, on behalf of its 200 member hospitals and health systems, asks that you sign **SB1905** into law.

Sincerely,

Ken Robbins
President

Howard A. Peters III
Senior Vice President