

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

Date, Time:

6/23/2022 1:16:51 PM

Name:

Thomas Fee

Where do you live:

Inver Grove Heights

Do you represent an organization?

No

What organization do you represent?

personal

What is your comment on the proposed mental health hospital?

6.23.2022

Jan Malcolm, Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Health

P.O. Box 64975

St. Paul, MN 55164 - 0975

Commissioner Malcom:

My name is Tom Fee, and I, like most, encounter people with mental illness almost every day. Some have needs that can be met in community settings, but some truly need the services that can only be provided in an inpatient setting. The simple truth today there are not enough inpatient mental health beds available. There is an urgent, unmet need for additional inpatient mental health beds that requires immediate action. Fairview's proposed mental health hospital is an important example of such action and will expand the state's capacity to meet the need for inpatient mental health and addiction beds.

For over 4 decades we have tried to "mainstream" folks suffering from persistent mental illness, asking them to manage their medications and take on the challenges of everyday life. This effort, while well intended has been a national failure and a societal shame. We need to re-build a model from the ground up and the small effort by Fairview represents a step forward in offering our brothers and sisters who struggle daily. Our State has been a leader in healthcare innovation and to do anything but wholeheartedly support this project would run contrary to our heritage as leaders in building future models of success.

I have served as board chair of both HealthEast Foundation and following the merger, Fairview Foundation. During my time we reinvented the mission of the foundation from replacing chapel chairs

to immersing ourselves in the communities we serve and empowering those communities, in partnership with the foundation, to address the needs of the communities from the inside out. I know what it takes to create change, and doing things 3% different does not cut it. To get 20% change you must do things 40% different. Fairview's commitment to the Bethesda conversion is an example of this- do not hesitate, stand for those who struggle without delay.

Fairview is a trusted leader and valued partner in meeting the mental health and addiction care needs in our region, and we are hopeful that Fairview will receive approval to build the new facility which will better position our healthcare community to address the current shortage of inpatient beds and bolster Minnesota's capacity to serve those in need.

Sincerely,

Thomas Fee