

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

Date, Time:

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Name:

Chelsea Schafter

Where do you live:

Minnetonka, MN

Do you represent an organization?

No

What organization do you represent?

What is your comment on the proposed mental health hospital?

The potential opening of the Acadia hospital in St. Paul would have negative effects on the patient population seeking treatment for mental health care in our state. While we know that mental health beds are needed tremendously in the State of Minnesota, utilizing a for-profit, private company which has a negative history in the treatment of its patients is not the way to go about fixing this issue. There have been numerous safety concerns brought forward as well in regards to the operations of Acadia facilities. Is that the kind of care we want to allow in the State of Minnesota? M Health Fairview has hundreds of banked beds within its system. Why are these beds not being utilized? They are putting PROFITS over patients by trying to push out having to provide inpatient mental health care to the people of Minnesota. They have said themselves, "mental health care is not reimbursed adequately." M Health Fairview operates under the guise of being a non-profit hospital but with the move they are attempting to make with opening Acadia to transition mental health services to, can be seen as an attempt to maximize their own profits. In terms of the effects this will have on the current staff who work in mental health services at other M Health Fairview sites, this can be seen as a union busting tactic with RNs and newly unionized psych associates who provide care to the mental health patients currently in their system as Acadia is not going to be a union facility. Also, according to their staffing plan, they will not be employing psych associates, but rather mental health technicians. This facility will also not have an emergency room attached to it. That is not going to change another real issue we are facing in our emergency rooms currently – the boarding of mental health patients. With Acadia, I do not doubt there will be extreme reviewing of potential patients to ensure they can obtain maximum profitability from

their acceptance with the least amount of liability – meaning very low acuity patients that they can get the most dollars from. A similar hospital was proposed in Woodbury in 2008 – with the same exact number of beds, 144. This hospital was not found to be in the public's best interest. What is the difference now? Mental health patients are not always just suffering from a mental health crisis – many also having preexisting medical conditions that need to be addressed as well. A lot of mental health patients come from indigent backgrounds and have not been compliant with medical treatments as well due to lack of accessibility. They need concurrent access to complete medical and mental health treatment without any delays. I currently work in a geriatric inpatient mental health unit, and we are continuously working with and needing our medical team to help care for our patients. Many times, these patients require transfers to higher levels of medical care while on our unit. Delays in treatment can occur when a “free-standing” mental health facility does not have all the appropriate resources to deal with a patient in a medical crisis and require transfer to a medical facility – which in turn, can lead to increased costs.

M Health Fairview needs to operate as they say they do – as a NON-PROFIT hospital – and stop trying to outsource services in the name of maximizing their profits. Keep mental health services in the hospitals – as they should be and currently are.