



Pat Quinn, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

Michelle R.B. Saddler, Secretary

Office of the Secretary
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September 23, 2011



VIA HAND DELIVERY AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Senator Jeffrey M. Schoenberg, Co-Chair
Representative Patti Bellock, Co-Chair
Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
703 Stratton Office Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Re: Closure of Chester Mental Health Center

Dear Senator Schoenberg and Representative Bellock:

On behalf of the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), and in connection with the proposed closure of the Chester Mental Health Center (Chester), the following are DHS' recommendations and its responses to the ten questions which are required to be answered pursuant to Section 5-10 of the State Facilities Closure Act, 30 ILCS 608/5-10.

Recommendation:

On May 30, 2011 the General Assembly passed an appropriations bill (HB 3717) for the operations of the nine (9) State-Operated Mental Health Centers (Mental Health Centers (MHC) or Hospitals) operated by DHS' Division of Mental Health. The legislation provided \$194.9 million against the Governor's requested budget of \$253.7 million for the nine (9) Hospitals.

DHS and the Division of Mental Health have spent considerable time and energy in an effort to determine a way that we can continue to provide the level of services which we have historically delivered and which we are statutorily mandated to deliver while doing so within the parameters of the appropriations as received. Regrettably, and after much reflection, we have determined that the closure of Chester Mental Health Center is the only course of action which will satisfy our fiduciary, statutory and clinical obligations.

In FY12, the Division of Mental Health would close Chester MHC's 243 beds. Pending statutory change, Alton Mental Health Center (Alton) in Alton, Illinois, would become the Maximum Security Hospital with the current civil acute unit (fifteen (15) beds) converting to an extended care unit.

Responses:

1. The location and identity of the State facility proposed to be closed:

Chester Mental Health Center
1315 Lehmen Drive, Chester, Illinois 62233

2. The number of employees for which the State facility is the primary stationary work location and the effect of the closure of the facility on those employees:

There are 465 employees at Chester MHC. Until the closure agreement is negotiated, we will not know the impact on the employees at Chester MHC.

3. The location or locations to which the functions and employees of the State facility would be moved:

- Due to related Hospital closures, for which notice of intent to close has already been provided to you, the State's capacity to provide acute inpatient psychiatric care will be significantly reduced. The broader mental health system, specifically private community-based hospitals and mental health providers, would be expected to provide much more of this service to the population currently served in the State psychiatric Hospitals.
- Pending statutory changes, Alton MHC would become the Maximum Security Forensic Hospital assuming the responsibility now provided by Chester MHC. One acute civil unit (fifteen (15) beds) at Alton Mental Health Center would change its function to an extended care unit.
- McFarland Mental Health Center (McFarland) in Springfield, Illinois, would convert all eighty-two (82) of its current civil acute inpatient psychiatric beds to medium security beds. McFarland's Kennedy Hall would be re-opened to provide extended care to fifteen (15) patients.
- The civil units (three units totaling seventy-five (75) beds) at Elgin Mental Health Center (Elgin) in Elgin, Illinois, would be converted to medium security forensic patients units totaling fifty (50) beds, and one unit (twenty-five (25) beds) would be dedicated to the treatment of refractory extended care patients.
- Chicago Read Mental Health Center (Chicago Read) in Chicago, Illinois would expand its responsibility for the treatment of extended care patients.

4. The availability and condition of land and facilities at both the existing location and any potential locations:

Chester Mental Health Center consists of seventeen (17) identical residential units and four (4) support buildings all enclosed under one roof. Of the seventeen (17) units, twelve (12) are occupied by residents and five (5) are vacant. The support buildings consist of the Administration, Clinical, Dietary and Educational buildings.

Upon closure, DHS would vacate these buildings and deem them excess property.

5. The ability to accommodate the functions and employees at the existing and at any potential locations:

- Due to related Hospital closures, the State’s capacity to provide civil acute inpatient psychiatric care will be significantly reduced, affecting approximately 2,800 civil admissions annually.
- Pending statutory changes, Alton MHC, with moderate security upgrades (capital improvements), would be converted to the Maximum Security Forensic Hospital. Staff training would occur to prepare staff on new policies, procedures and clinical management techniques needed to provide maximum security forensic services.
- McFarland MHC would require security upgrades in order for it to expand as a Medium Security Forensic Hospital with a dedicated unit for civil, treatment-refractory, extended care patients. Staff training would occur to prepare staff on new policies, procedures and clinical management techniques needed for these patients.
- Elgin MHC’s civil units would require moderate security upgrades in order for it to convert to fifty (50) forensic beds with one additional unit of twenty-five (25) beds dedicated to treatment-refractory, extended care patients. Staff training would occur to prepare staff on new policies, procedures and clinical management techniques needed for these patients.
- The Table below outlines the detail on the capital improvements necessary to accommodate DHS’ proposed actions:

| Facility | Cost | Summary of Improvement |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alton MHC | \$550,000 | Security perimeter fencing |
| Elgin MHC | \$250,000 | Security fencing |
| McFarland MHC | \$3,000,000 | Unit renovations and security fencing |
| TOTAL | \$3,800,000 | |

6. The cost of operations of the State facility and at any potential locations and any other related budgetary impacts:

Based on actual FY11 spending, the annual cost of operating Chester MHC was \$34.7 million. Given the cost of closing Chester and the two other Hospitals (Singer Mental Health Center (Singer) in Rockford, Illinois, and Tinley Park Mental Health Center (Tinley Park) in Tinley Park, Illinois, the proposed closures of which you have been provided with notice) and the minimal reinvestment in community services, a deficit of \$37.9 million will remain in the FY12 budget. Therefore, DHS will have to address this deficit with corresponding cuts of \$37.9 million throughout the rest of DHS’ budget. This deficit does not include capital improvements.

Under the proposal to close this Hospital (as well as Singer MHC and Tinley Park MHC), DHS will provide minimal funding to serve persons in community-based settings. Federal disproportionate share funding allocated to the State

for the provision of services to the uninsured population in State Hospitals will be proportionately reduced. The exact amount of this reduction has yet to be determined.

7. The economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of the State facility and any potential facilities:

A report commissioned from and prepared by the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana has been provided to you.

8. The ability of the existing and any potential community's infrastructure to support the functions and employees:

- The plans and recommendations as discussed represent significant increases in the level of acute inpatient psychiatric services that will become the responsibility of the community-based medical and mental health providers. The current capacity and ability of the private sector to serve this population is not fully known at this time. The State will need to engage with private hospitals to build capacity to provide this care to approximately 2,800 admissions annually. In addition, community-based mental health and substance abuse providers would also need to build capacity to enhance alternatives to inpatient care. There would be additional costs to the State for assuring the availability of these services.
- State functions will be re-allocated as follows:
 - Pending statutory changes, Alton MHC would become the Maximum Security Forensic Hospital, assuming the responsibility now provided by Chester MHC. One acute civil unit at Alton (fifteen (15) beds) will be converted to an extended care unit.
 - McFarland MHC would convert all eighty-two (82) of its current civil acute, inpatient psychiatric beds to forensic medium security beds. McFarland's Kennedy Hall would re-open to provide extended care to fifteen (15) patients.
 - Elgin MHC's civil units (three units totaling seventy-five (75) beds) would be converted to two medium security forensic units (fifty (50) beds) and one unit (twenty-five (25) beds) dedicated to treatment-refractory, extended care patients.
 - Chicago Read MHC would expand its responsibility for treatment-refractory, extended care patients.

9. The impact on State services delivered at the existing location, in direct relation to the State services expected to be delivered at any potential locations:

- All State services at Chester, Singer and Tinley Park Mental Health Centers will cease operations during FY12.
- Alton MHC, Chicago Read MHC, Elgin MHC and McFarland MHC would assume responsibility for

handling extended care or selective treatment-refractory patients currently in the system with selective new admissions.

- Pending statutory changes, Alton MHC would become the Maximum Security Forensic Hospital with the acute, civil unit (fifteen (15) beds) converting to a treatment-refractory extended care unit.
- McFarland MHC would become a Medium Security Forensic Hospital.

10. The environmental impact, including the impact of costs related to potential environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities:

Chester was on the Illinois Attorney General's Asbestos Litigation list due to the existence of asbestos floor tile throughout the Hospital. Approximately 100,000 square feet of asbestos-containing floor tile and mastic is present throughout the entire Hospital. Asbestos was also found in the skim coat (specifically on the seams where two pieces of drywall are joined) of the drywall throughout the Hospital. There are no underground storage tanks. The domestic water source is the City of Chester.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,



Michelle R.B. Saddler
Secretary

Very truly yours,



Lorrie Rickman Jones, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Mental Health