

July 24, 2003



Mr. Carl Henderson
Director, Office of Public Affairs RO
536 S. Clark Street, Room 668
P. O. Box 8136
Chicago, IL 60605

Re: Testimony on VA Lakeside Public Hearing, July 30, 2003

On behalf of the members of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, I write in support of the long-term enhanced-use lease of property in the City of Chicago under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that is commonly known as "Lakeside."

We are in strong support of the proposal jointly put forth by Northwestern Memorial Hospital/Health Care (NMH) and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC) to develop the Lakeside site to address the growing health care needs of the citizens of the Chicago region. With NMH and RIC fully committed to meet the health demands of our veterans now and in the future, we believe that this is the best use of this site and a valuable addition to the Chicago area's first-class health delivery system.

NMH and RIC have a proud and distinguished history of partnering with the Veterans Administration for almost 60 years in its efforts to improve health care for our nation's veterans. Because of that relationship, NMH and RIC are uniquely qualified to look for innovative ways to continue servicing veterans for many years to come --- and the development of a Lakeside facility is well-suited to that endeavor.

Moreover, the continued use of this property for medical purposes is the most logical and compatible plan with the surrounding environment, which is primarily the Northwestern University Medical Center campus. It is not only convenient, but also visionary, for these medical institutions to be lined so closely. Projections for our aging population show an increasing demand for health care delivery. This new facility will help meet that demand.

Finally, the planned expansion will stimulate the economy of the region, as first, the building phase, then the hiring of medical and service employees proceeds. In the end, it is a win-win situation for our deserving veterans, NMH and RIC, and the citizens of Chicago.

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