



**PeaceHealth
Sacred Heart Medical Center**

July 23, 2023

Matt Gilman, Program Manager
Oregon Health Authority
Public Health Division
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 465
Portland, OR 97232
Via email: Matt.S.GILMAN@oha.oregon.gov

RE: PeaceHealth Riverbend, new acute rehabilitation hospital

Dear Mr. Gilman:

I am a neurosurgeon specializing in the treatment of complex brain and spinal tumors that has completed an American Cancer Society fellowship in neuro-oncology. I also perform complex spine surgeries and am part of the neurotrauma team which supports our Level 2 trauma center. I have practiced at Oregon Neurosurgery for more than 20 years. This letter is to encourage OHA's approval of the proposed replacement and expansion of the Oregon Rehabilitation Center. Its current facility has aged out, is woefully inadequate, and while the staff and quality are exceptional, it needs more beds and it needs more space to be able to provide ADA accessible spaces, therapy spaces and state of the art equipment.

Brain tumors are a major cause of disability, and the prevalence of intracranial tumors is increasing. Due to technological advancements in surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy, the survival rate of patients with brain tumors has increased substantially, creating a pressing need to address the remaining neurological impairment and restore the quality of life of brain tumor survivors. Because the brain is generally unable to resume its functions immediately after surgery, getting patients to inpatient rehabilitation as early as possible post surgery helps to reestablish the connection between the mind and the muscles and promote functional improvement.

The same argument stands for the trauma, stroke and spinal cord injured patients which we care for.

I understand that OHA recently made some changes to its rules that allow new acute rehabilitation beds regardless of whether all acute care hospitals in the region are operating at optimal capacity. This is a positive change, and should support the timely approval of the PeaceHealth proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this comment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AK' or similar initials.

Andrew Kokkino, MD
Oregon Neurosurgery