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STATE'S ATTORNEY
DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

January 4, 2018

The Honorable Michael Gresk and City Council Members
Plan Commission
City of Wheaton
303 W. Wesley Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

RE: McDermott Center d/b/a Haymarket Center
Zoning Application – Text Amendment/Special Use

Dear Mayor Gresk, City Council Members and Plan Commissioners:

The attorney for Haymarket Center has brought to my attention the fact that Haymarket has applied for zoning approval to open a 16-bed residential treatment facility, as part of its plan to operate an out-patient facility at 140 E. Loop Road in Wheaton, Illinois. As the State's Attorney for DuPage County, I support the proposal and respectfully request your support as well.

DuPage County is in the midst of a heroin and opioid crisis. This epidemic has affected not just DuPage County, but all of the collar counties and most of the nation as a whole. According to a recent federal survey, 4 out of 5 new heroin users have previously used illicit pain pills. In fact, prescription drug abuse ranks third (behind alcohol and marijuana) for recreational intoxication by Americans over the age of 14. Increased intoxication by drugs has led to an increase in crime associated with drug use, and, unfortunately, a marked increase in deaths. In DuPage County, there were 51 deaths in 2015 attributed to opioids, including heroin, fentanyl and prescription pills. In 2016, that number rose to 78, and by December of last year, there were 81 deaths attributable to opioids. These numbers are staggering.

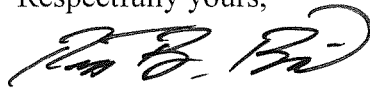
In response, in late December 2017, I joined with five other counties in filing suit against opioid pharmaceutical manufacturers to recoup costs of battling the epidemic of addiction. The goal of the litigation is to get the drug manufacturers to abate the public nuisance they created and to compensate the counties for all the damages and losses that have occurred and continue to mount. In this litigation, we are seeking compensation for the money which the County has been forced to spend on health care, pharmaceutical care and necessary services and programs for addicts.

Mayor Gresk, City Council Members and Plan Commissioners
January 2, 2018
Page Two

We have been fighting this epidemic on two main fronts: enforcement and education/treatment. On the enforcement side, we continue to aggressively arrest and prosecute those who sell their poison to DuPage County residents. The Federal Office of National Drug Control Policy's recent designation of DuPage County as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area will bring needed resources to local law enforcement agencies to help in our efforts to dismantle drug trafficking rings. On the education side, we continue working hard to educate the public relative to heroin use through the Robert Crown Center, and community forums on heroin and opioids. On the treatment front, the DuPage Narcan program has saved hundreds of lives, and our Health Department has been working to get heroin addicts into treatment through their Project Connect Program. The County has also established a Drug Court, which requires participants to secure treatment for substance use issues. Nationally, the recidivism rate for felons is 30% within the first three years. DuPage County's Drug Court has an 8% recidivism rate, however. The DuPage Drug Court strives to provide participants with quality treatment, which is a critical component for significantly better outcomes. The goal is to break the cycle of addiction that drives criminal behavior of the non-violent drug user.

I am familiar with Haymarket Center, having toured the Chicago facility, and I was impressed with what I witnessed. The fact is that we desperately need more treatment options closer to home. We need additional facilities in DuPage County which provide both out-patient, and more importantly, in-patient treatment to provide additional treatment opportunities to those in need in DuPage County. The research clearly shows that for non-violent drug addicts treatment offers far better outcomes than incarceration. Drug treatment has been shown to work, and certainly can offer opportunity to residents of the County who find themselves hopelessly lost in drug addiction.

Respectfully yours,



Robert B. Berlin
DuPage County State's Attorney