

To: Mayor Tod Satterthwaite and Urbana City Council
From: Rick Prince, AFSCME Council 31
Date: April 1, 2002
RE: Resolution for Zeller Mental Health Center

Attached is a draft resolution that we are asking the City of Urbana and other communities in our area to pass in support of keeping the Zeller Mental Health Center in Peoria open. Governor Ryan's plan to close this very important facility would decimate the help that the mentally ill and their families in this area so desperately need.

A team of professionals, including a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, nurse and activity therapist, develops the care given to residents at Zeller M.H.C. It is very important that this care be given to the some of the most mentally ill patients in the State. It would be so unfair that if people who need this kind of care so much was to have such care taken away from them.

One of the things that are most important in these instances is continuity of care. To have this taken away would simply be a travesty. And to say that the residents would be sent to private hospitals is not realistic. Local Peoria area physicians and hospitals have already shown that this would be a problem.

Zeller Mental Health Center serves in excess of five hundred residents yearly. The savings that have been proposed for closure of this and other like facilities has been estimated at only \$3.2 million. The kind of care and treatment for both the residents and their families at this facility over the years has been priceless and essential.

Therefore, we are asking you to please pass the resolution so that it may be sent to the Governor to show that Zeller Mental Health Center has the support of the City of Urbana.

Thank you for your consideration.

RESOLUTION NO.2002-04-012R

**RESOLUTION FOR ZELLER-MENTAL HEALTH CENTER
(AFSCNE COUNCIL 31)**

WHEREAS, Governor Ryan has announced his intention to close Zeller Mental Health Center in Peoria, which is operated by the State of Illinois Department of Human Services; and

WHEREAS the City of Urbana is one of the communities served by Zeller Mental Health Center; and

WHEREAS the individuals served by Zeller Mental Health Center are too seriously ill to be served by other community mental health programs, as determined by a private agency prior to the individuals receiving service from Zeller; and

WHEREAS many of the individuals served by Zeller Mental Health Center have exhibited violent and/or suicidal behavior, and/or have engaged in other criminal activity, and may thereby cause harm to themselves or others, or to property; and

WHEREAS these mentally ill individuals may not receive proper treatment by a secure facility like Zeller if Zeller is closed; and

WHEREAS the consequences of the lack of proper treatment would likely be tragic for the affected mentally ill individuals; and

WHEREAS some of those individuals lacking proper treatment may cause harm to themselves or other citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, as follows:

That we urge Governor Ryan to keep Zeller Mental Health Center open and functioning at its current capacity; and

That we urge the State Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to keep Zeller Mental Health Center open and fully functional; and

That a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Ryan and the Secretary of the State of Illinois Department of Human Services, and to the State Senator(s) and Representative(s) within whose districts our community lies.

PASSED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, _____.

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____, _____.

Tod Satterthwaite, Mayor

Resolution

WHEREAS Governor Ryan has announced his intention to close Zeller Mental Health Center in Peoria, which is operated by the State of Illinois Department of Human Services; and

WHEREAS the City of Urbana is one of the communities served by Zeller Mental Health Center; and

WHEREAS the individuals served by Zeller Mental Health Center are too seriously ill to be served by other community mental health programs, as determined by a private agency prior to the individuals receiving service from Zeller; and

WHEREAS many of the individuals served by Zeller Mental Health Center have exhibited violent and/or suicidal behavior, and/or have engaged in other criminal activity, and may thereby cause harm to themselves or others, or to property; and

WHEREAS these mentally ill individuals may not receive proper treatment by a secure facility like Zeller if Zeller is closed; and

WHEREAS the consequences of the lack of proper treatment would likely be tragic for the affected mentally ill individuals; and

WHEREAS some of those individuals lacking proper treatment may cause harm to themselves or other citizens; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the City of Urbana that we urge Governor Ryan to keep Zeller Mental Health Center open and functioning at its current capacity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge the State Legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to keep Zeller Mental Health Center open and fully functional; and be it further

RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Ryan and the Secretary of the State of Illinois Department of Human Services, and to the State Senator(s) and Representative(s) within whose districts our community lies.

Don't Close Zeller Mental Health Center



- Governor Ryan's plan to close Zeller Mental Health Center cannot save money without cutting services to surrounding communities. What is worse, it will rob the seriously mentally ill of the chance to participate fully in life. And because the population it serves is so extremely high risk and vulnerable, family members and staff believe the Zeller downsizing may cost lives.
- Zeller is a 95-bed hospital for the mentally ill located in Peoria and operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services. It serves persons who are seriously mentally ill from 23 counties.
- In his budget address, Governor George Ryan announced a plan to close Zeller. Since that announcement, the Department has not released any details on the planned bed closures. And beyond the Governor's initial cost savings estimate of \$3.2 million, there has been no detailed cost accounting to explain how the plan can fund sufficient community services, ensure adequate hospitalization for the acutely ill and result in cost savings.
- For most residents, Zeller is not a long term care facility. In FY 2001 460 patients in crisis were admitted, most for short term stays of a few days or weeks. Before admission patients must be screened by a private agency, which makes every effort to find a community program instead of hospitalization. Those admitted are the most severely ill, most often the patients who are a danger to themselves or others. Their mental condition has deteriorated to the point where they are suicidal or capable of harming others. Some are referred by hospital emergency rooms, others by family members desperate for assistance.
- While DHS says that it will fund private hospital beds to replace Zeller, many private hospitals have closed their psychiatric inpatient beds. A Peoria area hospital director has said that bed capacity will be a problem. Two Peoria hospitals recently closed a total of 36 psychiatric inpatient beds.
- At Zeller patients are seen by a treatment team that includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, nurse, and activity therapist. The team develops a plan for the patients to address their individual needs. This contrasts with community agencies, who do not have the funding to have psychiatrists and medical professionals on staff and often must rely on less educated and experienced staff.
- Zeller provides the structured setting that many individuals with mental illness need. It is a locked facility, although patients are given passes to leave the grounds as their therapy progresses. Daily programming includes therapy groups, activities and individual counseling. Zeller has experience in obtaining court orders to ensure that

patients are medication compliant. Few, if any, private hospitals provide this level of security and structure.

- Advocates for the mentally ill are concerned that the closure of Zeller will mean those patients needing longer term hospitalization will be released before their treatment has been completed. The longer stays at Zeller allow more work with close supervision, greater family involvement and provide greater long-term success in the community. Private hospitals are often under pressure by managed care agencies to discharge patients after only a few days or weeks.
- For a small number of patients, Zeller is their only refuge. These patients have not been able to recover through the use of medications. They rely on the hospital as a safety net, and a lifeline to a future recovery. Their family members fear that when they are released from Zeller they will end up as one of the 15% of Illinois prison inmates with a mental illness.
- DHS has stated that Zeller has done a stand-out job of placing patients in the community. This means, however, that many of Zeller's remaining patients are still at Zeller specifically because they are difficult to place in community programs. Private residential beds are scarce, and because most of Zeller's patients have a history of self-abuse or violence and require more intensive staffing they are often rejected for placement by private agencies. Outpatient programs without a residential component may not be sufficient for these individuals.
- Zeller has a long history of giving back to the mentally ill their livelihoods, their families, their very lives. The level of care and professionalism of the staff is not available in the community and would be difficult to duplicate. It certainly cannot be duplicated while the state is trying to save \$3.2 million. Beyond the human cost, there will also be significant costs to local government to fund homeless shelters and jail stays for these former hospital patients. While the state may save money by closing these beds, local governments will see increased costs.