

Mailing Address for All Offices:

P.O. Box 10015
Toledo, Ohio 43699-0015
Phone: 419-693-0631

Starr Ave Office

1425 Starr Ave.
Toledo, OH 43605
Phone: 419-693-0631
Fax: 419-693-0768

Woodruff Ave Office

544 E. Woodruff Ave.
Toledo, OH 43604
Phone: 419-242-9577
Fax: 419-321-6913

Cherry St Office

1212 Cherry St.
Toledo, OH 43608
Phone: 419-724-3133
Fax: 419-936-7425

HR/Finance Office

2310 Jefferson Ave.
Toledo, OH 43604
Phone: 419-693-0631
Fax: 419-936-7574

Jeffrey R. De Lay

President/Chief Executive Officer

March 6, 2018

Toledo City Council
One Government Center
Suite 2100
Toledo, OH 43604

President Matt Cherry and Members of Toledo City Council,

Unison Health is an agency that was created in 1995 as a result of a merger between the East Center for Community Mental Health and the Ruth S. Ide Community Health Agency. Together, we have been providing mental health and substance abuse services in this community since 1972. Today, Unison's 265 employees care for nearly 8,000 adults, adolescents and children every year.

One of the challenges we face as a community is dealing with the opioid epidemic. The Lucas County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (LCMHRSB) has identified capacity as a barrier to treatment of those facing addiction. In response to this community need, Unison Health, in partnership with the State of Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services Agency (OMHAS) and Lucas County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, opened a 16-bed detox center in June of 2017. This a good beginning, but recovery requires emphasis on a longer term support structure. The next step in the continuum of care is a Recovery House where a structured environment, training, professional and peer support are keys to increased success in battling addiction.

With this in mind, Unison Health again has partnered with OMHAS and the LCMHRSB to develop a project to establish a Recovery House. In fact, we have recently been notified that the State of Ohio has approved funding that will be used to leverage \$227,500 in improvements to 2310 Jefferson Avenue, a site we already own. The facility currently houses some of Unison Health's administrative support unit, but the structure is more ideally suited for residential use.

Unison Health chose our Jefferson location for the Recovery House proposal for several reasons. First, the house was built in 1892 as a residence and is best suited for that purpose. The building is large enough to comfortably accommodate 16 residents and to provide office space for on-site staff. Secondly, the building is structurally sound, has been maintained in very good condition for over 100 years, and requires very few upgrades in preparation for its return to residential use. Lastly, Unison Health already owns the facility without the burden of a mortgage. This is a significant factor in our business model by reducing the need for operational support.



This choice, while perfect from a business perspective, has some challenges. First, the site is currently zoned as CO Office Commercial. We need to change the zoning to RM36 Multi-Dwelling District to accommodate our proposed use. Secondly, we require a Special Use Permit to operate a residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility. Finally, through the review process, we were also notified that a waiver of the spacing requirements was needed since two other nonresidential treatment centers are located within 500 feet of our facility. On January 11, 2018, the Plan Commission approved our requests for zoning change and a special use permit. They also recommended that the waiver request be approved by Toledo City Council.

Throughout this process, we have been in discussions with many folks within our neighborhood. We have received support from several businesses. The Uptown Association, Mercy Health Group, Cherry Street Mission Ministries and SSOE Group have written letters of support for the project. We have also been encouraged by the offer to collaborate on employment opportunities from Uptown businesses as well as training support from Cherry Street Mission Ministries.

We cannot, however, ignore those that are not in support. We are aware that there are folks associated with the Old West End neighborhood that do not agree with locating another group home near its neighborhood. They are also not in support of City Council waiving the spacing requirement. They have, however, acknowledged the need for this service and support the work that Unison Health is doing in our community.

We believe that some of the resistance relates to a misunderstanding of the service we will be offering. A Recovery House is a sober living facility that provides a positive result for those that live there. Folks that reside in the Recovery House strive to rebuild their lives with a goal to be independent contributing members of our community. We believe this is a positive addition to our neighborhood and our community in general. There are many that are in agreement with that statement to include those that live and operate businesses in the Uptown area.

In conclusion, there is a challenge within our community as it relates to opioid addiction. There is also a recognized gap in services within our community to assist those in recovery. Unison Health wants to be a part of the solution and has offered an opportunity to help close the gap in services by utilizing one of our existing assets as a Recovery House. Unison Health respectfully requests support for this project by approving our request for a zoning change, a special use permit and a waiver of the spacing requirements. Please contact us directly if you want to further discuss this project or if you would like to tour the propose site.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey R. De Lay, President/CEO

David J. Moebius, Director-Business Operations