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Illinois Budget Allocates \$500,000 to Address Nursing Home Bed Crisis in Champaign County

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, September 16, 2025 — Champaign County's *Advocates for Aging Care* will receive a \$500,000 allocation in the Illinois state budget to help address the critical shortage of skilled nursing beds in the county. The funding—secured through the advocacy of Senator Paul Faraci—will support capital costs for a new skilled nursing facility in Champaign County.

Senator Faraci's support on behalf of older adults played a pivotal role in securing the funds. "This investment reflects our commitment to supporting our aging population and ensuring their continued well-being," said Senator Faraci. "Champaign County has the unfortunate distinction of being the most underserved county in the state in terms of skilled nursing beds, with a shortage of more than 300 beds. By working with local healthcare providers and educational institutions, we have the opportunity to create something new—a model of skilled nursing care in Illinois."

The funding, provided by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity through the Build Illinois Fund, will include \$200,000 for costs associated with land acquisition and \$300,000 for capital improvements.

"This announcement is a major step forward for seniors and their families in Champaign County," said Cathy Emanuel, Chair of the *Advocates for Aging Care* Steering Committee. "We are deeply grateful for Senator Faraci's support. This funding allows community partners to unite to attract an owner/operator to build a much-needed, new, high-quality and innovative skilled nursing facility. *Advocates for Aging Care* has more than 500 advocates who are going to appreciate the boost this will give to finding a good solution."

Founded in 2023, *Advocates for Aging Care* was formed in response to the closure of three local nursing homes, which significantly reduced access to care in Champaign County. The organization has since built a Community Collaborative to comprehensively address the gap. Partners include Carle, OSF, Christie Clinic, CU Public Health, the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois, United Way, Champaign County Health Care Consumers, and representatives from Parkland College and the University of Illinois. The Community Collaborative, in conjunction with *Advocates for Aging Care*, has already completed foundational work for a new facility, including a needs assessment, market study, and research on best practices in skilled nursing nationwide. "Our hope is that this new facility can serve as a model for the state of Illinois as well," Senator Faraci said.

"*Advocates for Aging Care*'s focus is on increasing the number of beds available in Champaign County while insisting on top-quality services," Emanuel said. "But it's going to take the community coming together at a time when the long term care industry is facing significant challenges. With support from community leaders in health care, higher education, and government, we can collaborate on innovative approaches to skilled nursing care and evaluate their impact. Thanks to Senator Faraci, this grant will help us do what is essential for the health of our community."