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October 8, 2021

Re: BZA Application No. 20472: The River School

Dear ANC3E commissioners:

We are excited that The River School has embarked on a strategy to increase its reach and access for the children of our city. We know from our own patients and families at Children's National that The River School is an unheralded treasure not only of Washington, DC but of our nation. Specifically, the school is a national leader in the therapy which is necessary to ensure full rehabilitation of hearing for children who receive cochlear implants.

A cochlear implant is a device which stimulates the nerve in the ear, allowing children to hear sounds they would not otherwise hear. The importance of the unique therapy offered at The River School is that it takes years to help children interpret and become accustomed to the sounds they are accessing to receive the benefit of the implant. Without the training after an implant, the benefits of cochlear implants are not often fully realized.

The River School focuses on a very specialized dimension of hearing rehabilitation that is time intensive and requires an integration with the learning process for Children – thereby striving to ensure they can fully realize their education potential. Whereas so much of our region's innovation happens outside the District of Columbia, the River School is an example of innovation in the learning and therapy domain that maximizes a medical device innovation. The River School is innovating for families right here in Washington, DC. They are offering the most innovative model for children with hearing loss in the nation. Their work serves as a beacon nationally and internationally for what outcomes can be achieved for kids with hearing loss.

Importantly, The River School is one of two diagnostic centers in Washington, DC for pediatric hearing loss which accepts Medicaid. Children's National is the other. Medicaid is the safety net for families who cannot afford health care. It is crucial for The River School to have the capacity to ensure equitable access to care for all children.

Our patients, families, and community benefit from The River School's unique inclusive model, its broad clinical services, and its strong advocacy for all children with hearing loss. Children's National is a strong supporter of The River School's vision to expand accessibility to this intensive and innovative therapy so that all children regardless of their family resources are able to maximize their hearing rehabilitation and educational potential.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.20472
EXHIBIT NO.85

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kurt" being more prominent than the last name "Newman".

Kurt Newman, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
Children's National Hospital

cc: Britlan Malek, Psy.D.
Child Development Program, Children's National Hospital