

Acute Care Services Committee
Agency Report for
Adjusted Need Determination Petition Regarding the
Proposed 2012 State Medical Facilities Plan
Boone SurgCare, PLLC

Petitioner:

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Request:

The petitioner requests an adjusted need determination for three additional operating rooms for an ambulatory surgery facility to be located in Watauga County, and serve patients from Watauga, Ash, Avery, Alleghany, Wilkes and Caldwell counties.

Background Information:

The Operating Room (OR) need methodology consists of several steps, which result in the number of ORs needed in OR service areas. The methodology uses a projected number of surgical hours, calculated by multiplying an estimate of surgery hours for inpatient and ambulatory cases for the previous year (data year) by the projected population change between the data year and the target year (four years from the data year). The number of operating rooms required by the target year is the result of dividing the projected number of surgical hours for the target year by 1,872 hours, which is the standard number of hours per OR per year based on assumptions used in the State Medical Facilities Plan (SMFP). The final methodology step, the number of additional ORs needed, is determined by subtracting the projected total number of required ORs from the current OR inventory, less exclusions.

In deference to the standard methodology, Chapter Two of the North Carolina SMFP allows persons to petition for an adjusted need determination if they believe their needs are not appropriately addressed by the standard methodology. In this instance, the petitioner states that patients in the area would benefit from a multi-specialty ambulatory surgery facility to meet needs not met by existing facilities.

Analysis/Implications

According to the North Carolina Proposed 2012 SMFP, there are six hospitals and one ambulatory surgery center serving the counties listed in the petition. There are 19 ORs in the planning inventory for the six-county area. The standard methodology projects no need for additional ORs in any of the counties, and there is a surplus of eight operating rooms for the counties combined.

Watauga County has a planning inventory of six ORs with a surplus of 1.89 ORs, resulting in no need for additional ORs. Although the petitioner discusses need within a six-county area, Watauga County is a single-county OR service area, and no need is demonstrated for an additional operating room either within the county or within the other five counties. The State Health Coordinating Council received no comments in support of petition, suggesting that surgical services in the county are sufficient to meet current need. The comment the Council did receive about the petition noted that evidence was lacking in the submitted materials regarding any unreasonable wait times for surgical services or infection risks

at hospitals in the counties listed. Furthermore, the commenter questioned the petitioner's statement that 235,000 visitors to the area would have need for surgery while in the area. While the potential exists for anyone to have need for surgery when visiting the area, the actual number of surgical patients from counties other than the facility county is gathered now in licensure renewal applications. Those numbers are part of the calculations in the standard OR methodology, which for 2012 has projected no need for ORs anywhere in the state.

Agency Recommendation

The Agency supports the operating room standard methodology, and has concluded that the methodology is adequately addressing the needs of the people in Watauga and surrounding counties. Therefore, the Agency recommends that the petition for an adjusted need determination for three additional operating rooms in Watauga be denied.