

**SHCC Public Hearing Presentation Comments for
Adjusted Need Determination for No Additional Hospice
Home Care Office in Davidson County**

Presented by Gary Drake, Director
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Good afternoon, my name is Gary Drake. I am the Chief Executive Officer for Hospice of Davidson County. I am here today to speak regarding our petition for an adjusted need determination to not include a need determination for an additional new hospice home care office in Davidson County in the 2009 State Medical Facilities Plan. We will be submitting the petition to the Medical Facilities Planning Section by the August 1st deadline.

Hospice of Davidson County was created in 1985 as a non-profit, community-based agency focusing on providing care for the terminally ill. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with a limited life expectancy and for their families. We provide physical, emotional, and spiritual support to enable individuals to die with dignity in the comfort of

their home or other residence. We have nearly 25 years of experience providing hospice home care services to local residents. Soon we will be opening our new inpatient facility. On behalf of the Board of Directors and all the employees of Hospice of Davidson County, I want to thank the members of the State Health Coordinating Council and the staff at the Division of Health Service Regulation for enabling us to obtain the CON for this facility. This 12 bed facility costing \$3.6 million dollars represents a milestone in hospice care in Davidson County, and will enable us to further achieve our goal of improving the quality of life for persons with a terminal illness during the final stage of their life. The Henry Etta and Bruce Hinkle Hospice House will be completed by the end of this year and will have a great impact on our census in 2009.

With regard to our petition, we believe specific circumstances exist in Davidson County with regard to utilization of hospice services such that this county has no need for an additional hospice home care agency based in Davidson County. Our petition will provide the detailed rationale. I would simply like to highlight a couple of these reasons.

First, the state-wide methodology is not applicable to Davidson County. As our petition will show, the SMFP methodology incorporates state-wide assumptions regarding the percentage of deaths served by hospice agencies that is not representative of Davidson County.

Second, the addition of another agency in Davidson County would represent unnecessary duplication of existing services. We are not here to suppress competition. As documented in the 2009 SMFP, Davidson County residents currently are served by 10 hospice agencies. So patients and their families do have choices. They certainly also have access. Hospice of Davidson County has been serving 60 patients per day for the first six months of this year. This is up from 55 per day last year. However, with our existing staffing, we have the capacity to serve 86 patients, right now. And our Board of Directors is supportive of growth of our agency. Over the years, they have shown tremendous support for us, in providing the resources necessary for us to grow. This support continues, as our Board is committed to authorizing increased staff levels, as necessary, to accommodate increasing patient growth. Hospice of Davidson County has never turned a patient away that had a terminal prognosis.

Third, addition of another hospice home care agency is not a cost effective alternative. As we will document in our petition, the infrastructure required to start up a new agency represents hundreds of thousands of dollars in salaries for administrative and support staff. In an era where cost of care is a major concern for patients, families, and payors, this expense is purely duplicative of the infrastructures and staff that currently

exist at Hospice of Davidson County and at other hospice agencies that serve Davidson County. The more effective alternative is for the current agencies to simply continue to grow as need increases.

I realize my time is short here. These are just a few of the reasons we will document in our petition. In summary, Hospice of Davidson County is very much in tune with the needs of County residents, and are dedicated to meeting those needs. Davidson County residents do not lack access to hospice services, and they do have choices in agencies. Davidson County physicians, hospitals, the health department, and many others in our community agree with our assessment, and see no need for another agency. These views will be evidenced in multiple letters of support included in our written petition which will be submitted August 1st.

The opening of our new 12 bed inpatient facility, our open access philosophy, and the availability of nine other hospices does ensure that patients wanting hospice services will have their desires met.

We hope you will support us and our community by eliminating this unnecessary need determination. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to discuss this important issue.