

August 9, 2017

Christopher Ullrich, M.D.
Chairman
North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council
Health Planning and Certificate of Need Section
North Carolina Division of Facilities Services
809 Ruggles Drive
Raleigh, NC 27603

Re: Adjusted Need Petition for Additional Inpatient Rehabilitation Beds in HSA III

Dear Dr. Ullrich:

I am a speech pathologist and the supervisor for acute rehabilitation services at Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center. I am writing to express my support for the Petition being filed by Novant Health and HealthSouth for an Adjusted Need Determination for additional inpatient rehabilitation beds in HSA III.

As you may be aware, utilization in HSA III for inpatient rehabilitation beds has exceeded or been just under 80% for the past three years. In addition, in Mecklenburg County there is only one provider of inpatient rehabilitation services and this same provider controls 95% of existing rehabilitation beds in all of HSA III.

Currently, patients at Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center have difficulty gaining admission to the current inpatient rehabilitation provider in Cabarrus, Gaston and Mecklenburg counties in HSA III. As a speech pathologist, I treat patients with a variety of diagnoses that have lost the ability to communicate and swallow. Many of these patients have suffered a stroke or have other neurological diagnoses. They are often active members of our community –working, driving, volunteering – whose lives have been drastically changed by a significant medical event. Their best chance of recovery and return to functional quality of life are the intense therapy services (physical, occupational, and speech therapies) offered in the inpatient rehabilitation setting.

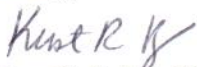
I have seen many appropriate patients with inpatient rehabilitation admission delayed or denied. Often, I believe this occurs secondary to the current provider offering beds to its own acute patients in lieu of the patients at Novant Health. Patients end up in other settings which do not provide services with the same level of intensity, frequency, or experience of the inpatient rehabilitation team. Their recoveries are delayed and their outcomes suffer.

Even as a resident of York County, I choose to seek medical care in the greater Charlotte area. In the unfortunate event that I or one of my family members were in need of acute hospitalization and further intense rehabilitative care, we deserve the choice of facilities, or at the very least access to the most appropriate level of care. It shouldn't be dictated by where we were acutely hospitalized.

This petition, if approved, will also promote cost-effective approaches and enhance the overall quality of healthcare services offered to the residents of Mecklenburg and surrounding counties.

Please convey to the SHCC my enthusiastic support and that of my colleagues for the approval of this Petition.

Sincerely,



Kristen R. Kubitz MED, CCC-SLP
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Fort Mill, SC 29708
York County