

COMMENT IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION BY
SENTARA ALBEMARLE MEDICAL CENTER TO
REMOVE THE FIXED MRI SCANNER NEED DETERMINATION IN THE
PASQUOTANK/CAMDEN/CURRITUCK/PERQUIMANS SERVICE AREA
IN THE 2022 SMFP

August 11, 2021

To the North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council
DHSR.SMFP.Petitions-Comments@dhhs.nc.gov

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to oppose the petition filed by Sentara Albemarle Medical Center (“Sentara”) to remove the need determination for a fixed MRI Scanner in the Pasquotank/Camden/Currituck/Perquimans Service Area (the “Pasquotank Service Area”) from the 2022 State Medical Facilities Plan (“SMFP”).

I am a resident of Camden County, North Carolina. I have lived here for my entire life. There is only one hospital in the four-county healthcare service area defined by the State as the Pasquotank Service Area—Sentara. Sentara also owns the only fixed MRI Scanner (and only mobile MRI Scanner) providing services to this community. Thus, patients like myself have no choice other than to go to Sentara to receive MRI imaging services in our home area. Sentara is located 10 minutes from my home. Because I do not want to receive my MRI services from Sentara, I am forced to travel to Virginia to receive my MRI at Chesapeake Regional Imaging Center, a Chesapeake Regional Medical Center-affiliated facility.

This travel to another state is a substantial burden both in time and expense to me and my family. I have to travel approximately 50 minutes to receive an MRI because there is only one other option available to me at Sentara Princess Anne. I believe that all patients, including those living in rural areas like the Pasquotank Service Area, which already suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, should have a choice of provider for their services, including MRI imaging services. I do not think one provider should be allowed to maintain complete control and dominance of a service in an area as large as the Pasquotank Service Area, particularly when the State had determined there is a need for additional services for patients.

In addition, the MRI services provided at Sentara are hospital-based services meaning they are more costly to me as a patient, than are the same services at freestanding, outpatient facilities like MRI and CT Diagnostics. It is important to me to not only receive quality healthcare services, but also affordable services, particularly when I can get the same service at a lower cost at another facility. I would like to have a choice of provider in my service area that can offer me a lower cost, more convenient option.

It is also my understanding that this is not the first time that Sentara has filed a petition to remove the same need determination (for an additional fixed MRI Scanner) from an annual SMFP in the Pasquotank Service Area. As a resident and consumer of these services, I am personally very concerned about this unfair tactic and the fact that Sentara has been successful in having such need determinations removed for each of the last five planning years that a need determination has been in the proposed

SMFP. I cannot imagine why a provider like Sentara would want to limit services to the population it serves, except to keep their own monopoly of these services so that no other competitor can potentially enter the market. This does not take into account the well being and needs of patients like myself and I believe the State should deny Sentara's petition and leave the need determination for a fixed MRI Scanner in the Pasquotank Service Area in the SMFP so that other providers may have an opportunity to apply and provide this needed services to patients. After many years of Sentara being able to keep competition out, I believe it is time that the State allowed it in.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat L. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "D".

Pat L. Davis

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This travel to another state is a substantial burden both in time and expense to me and my family. I have to travel approximately 50 minutes to receive an MRI because there is only one other option available to me at Sentara Princess Anne. I believe that all patients, including those living in rural areas like the Pasquotank Service Area, which already suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, should have a choice of provider for their services, including MRI imaging services. I do not think one provider should be allowed to maintain complete control and dominance of a service in an area as large as the Pasquotank Service Area, particularly when the State had determined there is a need for additional services for patients.

In addition, the MRI services provided at Sentara are hospital-based services meaning they are more costly to me as a patient, than are the same services at freestanding, outpatient facilities like MRI and CT Diagnostics. It is important to me to not only receive quality healthcare services, but also affordable services, particularly when I can get the same service at a lower cost at another facility. I would like to have a choice of provider in my service area that can offer me a lower cost, more convenient option.

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Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Caitlin W. Davis". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Caitlin W. Davis

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I am a resident of Pasquotank County, North Carolina. I have lived here for my entire life. There is only one hospital in the four-county healthcare service area defined by the State as the Pasquotank Service Area—Sentara. Sentara also owns the only fixed MRI Scanner (and only mobile MRI Scanner) providing services to this community. Thus, patients like myself have no choice other than to go to Sentara to receive MRI imaging services in our home area. Sentara is located 5 miles from my home. Because I do not want to receive my MRI services from Sentara, I am forced to travel to Virginia to receive my MRI at MRI & CT Diagnostics at Greenbrier, a Chesapeake Regional Medical Center-affiliated.

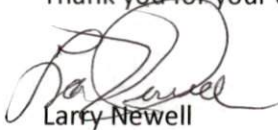
This travel to another state is a substantial burden both in time and expense to me and my family. I have to travel approximately 45 miles to receive an MRI because there is only one other option available to me. I believe that all patients, including those living in rural areas like the Pasquotank Service Area, which already suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, should have a choice of provider for their services, including MRI imaging services. I do not think one provider should be allowed to maintain complete control and dominance of a service in an area as large as the Pasquotank Service Area, particularly when the State had determined there is a need for additional services for patients.

In addition, the MRI services provided at Sentara are hospital-based services meaning they are more costly to me as a patient, than are the same services at freestanding, outpatient facilities like MRI & CT Diagnostics at Greenbrier. It is important to me to not only receive quality healthcare services, but also affordable services, particularly when I can get the same service at a lower cost at another facility. I would like to have a choice of provider in my service area that can offer me a lower cost, more convenient option.

It is also my understanding that this is not the first time that Sentara has filed a petition to remove the same need determination (for an additional fixed MRI Scanner) from an annual SMFP in the Pasquotank Service Area. As a resident and consumer of these services, I am personally very concerned about this unfair tactic and the fact that Sentara has been successful in having such need determinations

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Thank you for your consideration.



Larry Newell

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I am a resident of Camden County, North Carolina. I have lived here my entire life and I will be 60 years old in a few months. There is only one hospital in the four-county healthcare service area defined by the State as the Pasquotank Service Area—Sentara. Sentara also owns the only fixed MRI Scanner (and only mobile MRI Scanner) providing services to this community. Thus, patients like myself have no choice other than to go to Sentara to receive MRI imaging services in our home area. Sentara is located 30 minutes from my home. Because I do not want to receive my MRI services from Sentara, I am forced to travel to Virginia to receive my MRI at Chesapeake General Hospital.

This travel to another state is a substantial burden both in time and expense to me and my family. I must travel approximately 50 minutes to receive an MRI because there is only one other option available to me. I believe that all patients, including those living in rural areas like the Pasquotank Service Area, which already suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, should have a choice of provider for their services, including MRI imaging services. I do not think one provider should be allowed to maintain complete control and dominance of a service in an area as large as the Pasquotank Service Area, particularly when the State had determined there is a need for additional services for patients.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Faye F Perry
P.O. Box 52
Shiloh, NC 27974