

**Presentation of Special Needs Petition for
Two Specialty Vascular Access Operating Rooms in HSA VI,
Proposed 2024 State Medical Facilities Plan
Raleigh, July 26, 2023**

Presented by: Mr. Robert Baggett

Good afternoon. I am Robert Baggett, 35-year retired police officer. I tell police cadets all the time where you stand is what you see. I am standing before you today as a dialysis patient living in Rocky mount i.e., Nash County. I am here today to speak in support of Carolina Vascular Care's special need petition for additional vascular access operating rooms in HSA VI for the 2024 Plan.

My kidneys do not work, so I depend on dialysis to keep me alive. My life involves three half days a week at a dialysis center to get my blood cleaned. It also involves regular maintenance of the surgical shunt in my arm through which I get dialysis. This is the place where the technician connects me to the dialysis machine. If I take good care of it, everything will go well. Each time I go for dialysis, the technicians check the shunt to be sure it is functioning before hooking me up to the dialysis machine.

The shunt takes a lot of wear and tear, and my body naturally tries to close it up. To keep it open and functional, I need about two to four maintenance procedures on the shunt a year. Sometimes these are scheduled procedures and sometimes I need them emergently due to the shunt not working. During these times, you are not receiving any treatments at all: meaning your body is building a lot of fluid, toxins and you just do not feel good; And it takes a while to get back to normal.

Some might say, why don't you just go to the hospital emergency room. That is an

option but is not a good one. Fistula emergencies are not real emergencies in the emergency room. They deal with crimes, car wrecks and other surgical needs. Also, the emergency room at Nash UNC and other local hospitals does not have a fistula vascular surgeon(s), only general surgeons. The cost of going to the emergency room is 4x higher than going to a vascular clinic. Vascular access centers are clearly the better choice for most patients as they are significantly more affordable, and you don't have to deal with the uncertainty of wait times at a hospital.

I am just one of thousands of patients in the Eastern North Carolina, that need these special procedures done several times a year to stay alive.

This is the life of a person on dialysis. You can see why we need to have the vascular access centers as close to our homes as possible. Currently, we have three office-based centers in HSA VI where we can these access procedures done. But they will not stay open unless they can convert to ambulatory surgery centers. Please help them stay open by adding more vascular access operating rooms to the state's plan to meet the needs of us dialysis patients.

Thank you for your time.

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