



Creating solutions, One person at a time.

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September 24, 2009

DFS Health Planning
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Thomas J. Pulliam, MD
Chairman, Long-Term Care and Behavioral Health Committee
NC State Health Coordinating Council
Division of Health Services Regulation
North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation
Raleigh, NC 27603

Medical Facilities
PLANNING SECTION

Subject: Support of Thomasville Medical Center Petition for New Psychiatric Inpatient Beds in Davidson County in the Piedmont Local Management Entity (LME)

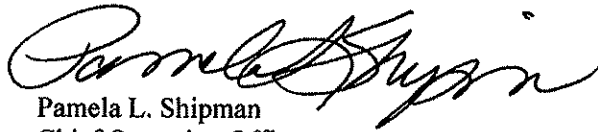
Dear Dr. Pulliam:

Hello, I am Pam Shipman, Chief Operating Officer for PBH, the Local Management Entity that serves Cabarrus, Davidson, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties. I am writing to express my support for the petition of Thomasville Medical Center to convert seven of its existing acute care beds to psychiatric beds as a necessary step to enable Thomasville Medical Center to file a CON application in 2010 to expand its inpatient geriatric behavioral health program from 26 to 33 beds. PBH supported a similar petition and CON application to expand the Thomasville Medical Center geriatric behavioral health program by eleven beds to twenty-six in 2004-2005 and they have successfully implemented and filled those beds. I understand there has been a recommendation to deny this adjusted need determination petition by the Medical Facilities Planning Section, and that your committee will be reviewing this matter on Friday, September 25th.

The PBH LME and Thomasville Medical Center have a longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship. We have worked collaboratively on a number of issues, most particularly meeting the needs of consumers needing crisis or inpatient psychiatric care. Thomasville Medical Center's geriatric behavioral health unit is able to accommodate the unique needs of a very special population served by our LME. The older adult population responds best to specialized care like that offered at Thomasville Medical Center. This specialization along with the willingness and capability to treat patients with complicated medical co-morbidities offers the older adult consumers of the PBH LME the ability to receive inpatient psychiatric care close to home. This very successful program serves patients from a wide area that includes all five of our constituent counties. The program is very much in demand and maintains a high occupancy rate. We are concerned at the number of individuals that have been denied admission due to capacity issues. The PBH area is one of rapid population growth, and this includes our geriatric population. We are struggling to meet the needs of many consumer groups within current resources. Additional inpatient capacity for the geriatric population that is located in our counties is important in successful transition of people back to their community placements.

We are asking that you give serious consideration to Thomasville Medical Center's request to have the opportunity to seek the state's approval for a second expansion of this much needed geriatric behavioral health inpatient program. This service is an important part of our community continuum.

Sincerely,



Pamela L. Shipman
Chief Operating Officer
PBH