

DFS Health Planning  
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Medical Facilities  
PLANNING SECTION

Public Hearing on Proposed 2010 SMFP  
Asheville, NC  
July 24, 2009

**Presentation: Hospice House Foundation of WNC, Inc.  
Special Needs Petition**

Good afternoon. My name is Michele *Alderson* and I am a member of the Hospice House Foundation of WNC Board. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about a petition that we intend to file on July 31 requesting an adjusted need determination for inpatient hospice beds in Macon County in the 2010 State Medical Facilities Plan.

The Hospice House Foundation of WNC was founded in 2005 by a group of hospice volunteers who, in the course of caring for patients, and in conversation with patient families, recognized the critical need for an inpatient hospice facility in our community. The mission of the Hospice House Foundation of WNC is to obtain funds for the construction and endowment of an inpatient facility for our community and to support hospice.

The Proposed 2010 State Medical Facilities Plan shows a deficit of three inpatient hospice beds for Macon County in 2013. In our petition, we will be requesting that a special need determination be made for six inpatient hospice beds in Macon County in the 2010 State Medical Facilities Plan. Our petition will outline in detail why

we believe our community can support six inpatient beds, but I would like to provide you with some background on our situation here today.

There is currently no inpatient hospice facility in North Carolina west of Asheville, although one is currently under CON review. The closest freestanding hospice facility is the Solace Center in Asheville, which operates 15 inpatient beds and 12 residential beds. Not only is the Solace Center located 75 miles or more away from the majority of hospice patients served in Macon County, its inpatient beds are operating at 100% capacity. Therefore, there is no alternative for hospice patients in our community who need inpatient care other than to be admitted to a hospital or nursing home, neither of which is an ideal setting for providing end-of-life care and carrying out the hospice philosophy.

Historically, we have attempted to collaborate with our local hospice agency to develop a hospice facility in our community. In fact, two successful special needs petitions have been filed requesting need determinations for Macon County in the 2007 and 2008 State Medical Facilities Plans. We were prepared to file a certificate of need application in 2008 in coordination with the local hospice agency and learned abruptly that they were not willing to pursue the project. We have been committed to developing a hospice facility since our Foundation began. Unfortunately, our unsuccessful efforts to work

with our local hospice agency delayed our progress. While our progress has been delayed, our commitment to our mission and our enthusiasm for developing a hospice facility for our community remains strong. We have been engaged in discussions with two different hospice agencies who are interested in partnering with us to manage our proposed hospice facility. Both of the interested parties operate successful inpatient facilities themselves. With the promise of a strong partnership, we know that our mission can finally come to fruition if given the opportunity to file a certificate of need application for inpatient hospice beds in 2010.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to speak today, and for your consideration of our petition. I would welcome the opportunity to respond to any questions you might have about the need itself or about the unique situation we have faced in our continued efforts to provide inpatient services in our community.