

**Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG)
Comments Regarding the Hospice Inpatient Bed Need Determination
for Guilford County in the Proposed 2014 State Medical Facilities Plan**

Good afternoon. My name is Pat Soenksen and I am President and CEO of Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG). Hospice care enables members of our community to live fully, with comfort and dignity, to the end of life.

After our humble grassroots beginning in the late 1970's, HPCG has grown over the last three decades to serve more than 22,000 patients and families, including providing bereavement counseling and support for countless adults and children in our community. Last year, HPCG served a total of 1,438 patients which included 341 patients at Beacon Place, our hospice inpatient facility, a 34% increase over the 255 patients served in the previous year.

Regarding the Hospice Need Determination for 16 hospice inpatient beds for Guilford County in the Proposed 2014 State Medical Facilities Plan, **Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro supports the current hospice inpatient bed methodology and resulting need determination for additional inpatient hospice beds in Guilford County.** Nationally, eighty-three percent (83%) of all hospice patients are age 65 or older and with the aging of the population, particularly the Baby Boomer generation, demand for hospice care by patients and families is predicted to continue to increase at a strong rate.

As we monitor trends for the future, recent data from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) has revealed that hospice inpatient days of care have declined as a percentage of total days of care from 2.9 percent (2.9%) in 2010 to 2.2 percent (2.2%) in 2011. As a result, Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro also supports the recent recommendation by Long Term and Behavioral Health to develop a hospice work group in 2014 which is comprised of representatives of both the Association of Home Care and Hospice (AHHC) and the Carolinas Center for Hospice and End of Life Care (TCC) to reexamine and explore the inpatient hospice need methodology. This was a recommendation also supported by the North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council (SHCC) Chairman Jerry Parks during the discussion of the recent petition by Hospice of Wake County and the public statement of support by AHHC and former SHCC member, Tim Rogers.

In addition, Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro has had a very positive relationship with Hospice of the Piedmont (HOP) which also has a Certificate of Need (CON) to serve Guilford County. Both organizations are committed to working collaboratively to carefully evaluate the need for hospice services in Guilford County and to seek approval to appropriately expand our facilities' capacity, as indicated. We also work closely and cooperatively with our local health system, Cone Health, which is supportive of HPCG's plans to address future hospice inpatient bed need.

We are very proud of Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro's tradition of responding to the changing healthcare and end-of-life care needs of our community. Thank you for this opportunity to publicly express our support for the current hospice inpatient bed need methodology for Guilford County.

