

Comment on Petition for Adjustment Need Determination for Fixed Cardiac Catheterization Equipment in Wake County

COMMENTER

UNC REX Healthcare
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COMMENT

UNC REX Healthcare (Rex) is providing a comment in order to update the State Health Coordinating Council (SHCC) on its efforts to collaborate with WakeMed on cardiac catheterization lab issues in Wake County. As noted in Rex's petition, representatives from Rex and WakeMed met earlier this year and Rex sent a letter to WakeMed following that meeting with several questions that would move the process forward such as how WakeMed would work with the UNC REX physicians in their hospital and what would be the price and terms of a purchase or lease agreement for a cardiac cath lab. Rex sent this letter on March 28, 2016 and did not receive a response prior to July 28th, the date of the SHCC public hearing in Raleigh and the submission date for petitions.

WakeMed sent a letter of response to Rex on August 5, 2016, more than four months after Rex's letter. Please find a copy of WakeMed's letter attached. WakeMed's vague and incomplete response further supports Rex's belief that WakeMed is not sincere in its desire to collaborate on this issue. As an example, WakeMed contends in the letter that it knows of "no legal options to transfer cardiac catheterization labs." WakeMed is certainly well-aware of the option of selling or leasing an existing cardiac catheterization lab from one provider to another within the same county through a Certificate of Need application. In 2012 WakeMed pursued a similar option through the purchase of operating rooms from Southern Eye Associates and subsequent CON application to relocate those rooms to another facility within the county.

Based on these developments, Rex believes it is clear that the most effective solution for patients is to allow Rex to expand its capacity through the approval of its petition for a special need adjustment for fixed cardiac catheterization equipment. No other result will enable patients to benefit from the lower charges available at Rex.

Attachment

August 5, 2016

Office of the President & CEO

Steve W. Burriss
President
UNC Rex Healthcare
4420 Lake Boone Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607

Dear Steve,

On behalf of WakeMed Health & Hospitals, I would like to personally thank you and your team again for taking time to discuss potential opportunities for our hospitals to better collaborate as we both seek to meet the cardiac health needs of the residents of Wake County, the surrounding region, and throughout the state. We continue to believe that through a productive dialogue between our hospitals' leadership and physician teams, we will be able to develop a win-win solution to the ongoing disagreement surrounding cardiac catheterization equipment in our market.

We were surprised by your team's recent comments at the July 28 State Medical Facilities Plan public hearing, where it was suggested that WakeMed was not interested in continuing these conversations. Nothing could be further from the truth. At WakeMed, we are keenly interested in coming up with a solution and we are working with our medical staff to develop the details of our proposal. Operational issues such as those raised by UNC Rex involve multiple stakeholders and creative thinking, and often take several months to resolve. UNC Rex did not communicate any expectation for a timeline for continued discussions of the matters which were raised in our first meeting, and has not separately followed up with WakeMed to request an update on the status of our response. Again, the statements at the July 28 public hearing came as a surprise. We hope you will reach out to us in the future before making this type of incorrect statement in a public forum.

The following are our recommendations in response to your March 28, 2016 letter:

- Availability of WakeMed catheterization labs for UNC Rex physician use:
 - Call responsibility by privileged interventional UNC Rex physicians would be limited to only covering their own patients. There would be no additional call responsibility;
 - WakeMed would be happy to make accommodations for UNC Rex physicians to schedule cases 7 days a week and will accommodate, if desired, block scheduling for cases;
 - WakeMed will work with UNC Rex to ensure cases are clinically integrated into both of the hospitals' Epic electronic medical record systems.
 - High quality, performance and safety standards are top priorities for both of our hospitals. WakeMed would welcome the opportunity to share and compare protocols so we may both learn from each other to improve patient care. We continuously

challenge ourselves to improve and would gladly implement changes to protocols if doing so would enhance our quality initiatives.

- Even if WakeMed was interested, we know of no legal options to transfer cardiac catheterization labs to UNC Rex Healthcare. We are committed to a more collaborative approach in utilizing our existing capacity to meet the cardiovascular needs of all in our community, region and state.
- WakeMed and its physicians are working hand-in-hand with Wake County EMS and other community partners on interventional stroke management. We are very open to a more collaborative approach working with UNC Rex and Duke Raleigh to better meet the community's needs as related to interventional stroke care.

Again, we believe this initial meeting was a good first step and WakeMed strongly desires to move forward along this path. We hope you still see the benefits of developing a collaborative solution.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding next steps.

Very respectfully,

Donald 
Donald Gintzig
President & CEO