



**APPALACHIAN REGIONAL  
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

Chuck Mantooh, FACHE  
President & CEO

February 28, 2022

North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council  
809 Ruggles Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council:

I am writing to support the petition submitted by Long Term Care Management Services, LLC d/b/a Liberty Healthcare and Rehabilitation Services (“Liberty”) for a Policy to be added to the 2023 SMFP, Policy ESRD-4, which will allow for the development or expansion of a kidney disease treatment center at a skilled nursing facility

I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Appalachian Regional Healthcare System. Our system is located in Northwest North Carolina and consists of Watauga Medical Center: a 117-bed acute care hospital in Boone, NC, and Charles A. Cannon, Jr., Memorial Hospital: an 8-bed CAH in Linville, NC.

Oftentimes, ARHS facilities struggle to find placement at outpatient centers for high acute residents needing dialysis. Many skilled nursing communities cannot accept these higher acuity residents due to the travel demands and cost associated, and the outpatient centers are unable to support patient comorbidities. Therefore, upon discharge, these residents end up being readmitted to the hospital.

Having the availability to discharge patients with dialysis needs to a nursing home and have one facility address both skilled and dialysis care would be a clinical innovation. Same location care would allow for better collaboration of care, fewer hospital readmissions, and stronger relationships between nursing home operators and Watauga Medical Center.

I strongly encourage you to approve the Liberty Policy ESRD-4 petition.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Chuck Mantooh, President & CEO  
Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, Inc.