

February 24, 2023

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 Regional Director of Case Management for UNC REX and UNC Johnston.

Rex was founded in 1894, UNC REX Healthcare (a member of UNC Health Care) is a private, not-for-profit health care system. For over 120 years, UNC REX has met the health care needs of our community by providing various services throughout Wake County. UNC REX Healthcare has multiple facilities located in Apex, Cary, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Wakefield, and Raleigh.

Throughout the years UNC REX has grown through the provision of new services and the construction of new facilities. These facilities include an acute care hospital, wellness centers, two skilled nursing facilities focusing on rehabilitation and long-term nursing care, urgent care centers, wound healing, emergency care and dedicated centers for cancer, heart and vascular, women’s care, surgical services (such as bariatric and heartburn), orthopedic, neurology, pain management and sleep disorders.

With more than 6,400 staff members, UNC REX Healthcare is one of the largest employers in Wake County. We pride ourselves on our dedicated staff, and it’s clear from their smiles, willingness to help and unwavering commitment to excellence that UNC REX employs the best and treats them as such. In fact, UNC REX was the first business in North Carolina to open a day care for co-workers’ children, and we have received multiple awards for being one of the best places to work in health care and in the Triangle.

Our hospital in Smithfield is licensed for 179 medical/surgical beds and 20 behavioral health beds. It includes a 24/7 emergency department and various outpatient services. It opened in 1951 as Johnston Memorial Hospital. In February of 2010, the hospital opened a five-story wing with 101 patient suites, a food court, modern operating rooms and 16-bed intensive care unit. While the original 1950s building is no longer used for patient stays, it does house patient services such

as sleep studies and joint replacement surgery rehab. It's also used as office space for administrators and departments such as marketing, human resources and medical staff services.

In 2009, Johnston Health Clayton was opened to provide easy access to care for the growing population in and around Clayton. With this growth came the expansion of the Clayton campus to a three-story wing, which opened in January 2015. Along with a freestanding emergency department and an outpatient center that provides same day surgery, imaging and a lab, Johnston Health Clayton offers 50 inpatient beds to care for the sick and injured with expanded services such as labor and delivery. The three-story Johnston Professional Plaza is home to Johnston Health's medical and radiation oncology services as well as a primary care practice.

The system also includes primary care offices in Clayton, Smithfield and Kenly, and the SECU Hospice House in Smithfield.

One of the biggest discharge planning challenges for the Triangle East involves patients who require acute care and also need dialysis after they come into the hospital. Traditionally, dialysis patients are among the most expensive patients to keep in the hospital, and any prolonged stay is detrimental to their condition. Oftentimes, Triangle East division for UNC 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.

Establishing an on-site dialysis model within a SNF would result in patients discharging from the hospital sooner, re-admit to the hospital less, recover more quickly after treatment, and achieve a higher quality of life.

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,

Sherry Henderson

Sherry Henderson
Regional Director

UNC Rex and UNC Johnston

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherry Henderson", written over a light blue horizontal line.