

**Acute Care Services Committee
Agency Report
Adjusted Need Determination for
Demonstration Dental-Only Operating Room in Wake County
Proposed 2016 State Medical Facilities Plan**

Petitioner:

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Request:

The petition requests that the 2016 North Carolina State Medical Facilities Plan (SMFP) include “an adjusted need determination for one operating room and related procedure rooms in Wake County to be included in a demonstration dental-only ambulatory surgical center.”

Background Information:

Chapter Two of the SMFP allows persons to petition for an adjusted need determination if they believe their needs are not appropriately addressed by the standard methodology. Petitions are of two types: (1) those that recommend changes in basic policies and methodologies, which are submitted in the spring; and (2) those that request adjustments to a need determination for a specific service and service area, which are submitted in the summer.

In the spring of 2015, a petitioner requested creation of a policy to allow an exemption for ambulatory surgery centers devoted to pediatric dentistry. In response to the spring petition, the SHCC determined that a policy change was not appropriate, because it was not clear that the challenges faced by the petitioner existed throughout the state. As a result, the spring petition was denied. Although it was denied, the petition brought attention to an area about which the SHCC needed more information. As a result, the Division convened a stakeholder meeting on June 3, 2015 to obtain input about the nature and scope of the issues regarding access to ORs by dentists and oral surgeons. Attendees at the meeting included dentists, oral surgeons, anesthesiologists, consultants, SHCC members, and representatives from dental schools, hospitals and professional societies.

Analysis/Implications:

On July 29, 2015, TIC submitted the current petition for an adjusted need determination for “one OR and associated procedures in Wake County to be included in a demonstration dental-only ambulatory surgical center.” Triangle Implant Center (TIC) recommended several specific criteria for the proposed demonstration project. Although the SHCC addresses the need for ORs, it does not address procedure rooms. A need determination is not required for a facility to build procedure rooms.

In the fall of 2008, the SHCC created a Single Specialty Ambulatory Surgery work group that met and drafted recommendations for a demonstration project “to evaluate and test the concept of single specialty ambulatory surgery centers in North Carolina.” On May 27, 2009, the SHCC approved plans for the demonstration project, limiting the number to three sites. The 2010 SMFP outlined specific criteria for the three demonstration project facilities. No dental/oral surgery facilities applied to participate in the demonstration. Evaluation of this demonstration project is ongoing, and not scheduled for completion for approximately four more years. Since that time, and in line with the basic principles, the SHCC has not approved adjusted need determinations for ORs in ambulatory surgical facilities dedicated to a single specialty.

Even with this history, TIC concluded that the situation regarding access to ORs, for both adult and pediatric dental patients, has reached a point that it warrants consideration by the SHCC. The foundation of the current request lies in the petitioner’s claim of a shortage of oral surgeons and dentists, which results in a large underserved population in Wake County. Of special concern are pediatric and adult patients covered by Medicaid. The petitioner states that this shortage is exacerbated by regulatory, financial, and logistical barriers to obtaining sufficient OR access and time in the area.

Agency Recommendation:

Although the Agency supports the standard methodology, the petitioner has demonstrated “...unique or special attributes” which “are not appropriately addressed by the standard methodology.” In addition, the meeting of stakeholders identified access to ORs for dental procedures as a significant challenge. Even though some service areas and providers may be able to secure adequate dental surgical treatment for their patients, including those covered by Medicaid, access to ORs appears to be a significant challenge in many areas of the state.

Given available information and comments submitted by the August 14, 2015 deadline, and in consideration of factors discussed above, the agency recommends denial of this petition. Instead, based on the stakeholder meeting, as well as other information reviewed, the Agency recommends identification of a need determination for a demonstration project, to include operating rooms to be established in dental-only ambulatory surgical facilities in several areas across the state. The proposed facilities would not necessarily be limited to providing pediatric dental surgery; they would, however, have to demonstrate that the proposed facility is substantially committed to providing dental surgery to persons of low income, including Medicaid recipients.