



## Public Hearing Comments

### Home Hospice Care Agency Adjusted Need Petition

Presented by Timothy Walsh, Financial Analyst

Good afternoon: My name is Timothy Walsh and I am here on behalf of Liberty Home Care Services. Liberty Home Care Services (“Liberty”) seeks to expand its service line to include hospice services in Hyde County and plan to submit a petition for an adjusted need determination for an additional home hospice care agency in Hyde County in the 2018 SMFP.

#### Background

Liberty Home Care was established in North Carolina in 1994 with the formation of Liberty Home Care, LLC. Today, Liberty Home Care provides home health services from offices in 27 locations and hospice services from 21 locations covering various urban and rural counties in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

#### Reasons for the Proposed Adjustment:

The Proposed 2018 SMFP indicates no need determination for an additional hospice office in Hyde County. However, we have determined that there are unique circumstances in Hyde County that necessitate the development of a home hospice care agency in Hyde County, including the following:

- There currently are no licensed hospice offices actually located in Hyde County
- Extensive drive time from current hospice locations to Hyde County

- Liberty's existing home care office, which is the only licensed home care/home health provider in Hyde County
- Demographics among the senior population
- Unique population will never meet current SMFP threshold

### **Existing Hospice Providers for Hyde County**

As of July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 there was one licensed home care/home health provider in Hyde County: Liberty Home Care<sup>1</sup>, the petitioner of this request. In addition, Community Home Care and Hospice (Beaufort County), Community Home Care and Hospice (Martin County), and Amedisys Hospice Care (Washington County) are the only entities licensed by the state of NC to provide hospice services in Hyde County. Community Home Care and Hospice (Hyde County) is also listed as an entity licensed by the state of NC to provide hospice services in Hyde County. However, they have closed the office and either terminated or moved all the employees. This is confirmed on their website, as the Hyde County (Engelhard) office is not listed as one of their serviced locations.

### **Geographical Access to Hyde County Residents**

Hyde County is defined by water. Of the counties total area of 1,424 square miles, 613 square miles is land and 811 square miles (57%) is water. It is the second-largest county in North Carolina by total area. Since there is currently not a hospice office located in Hyde County, residents in need of hospice care must utilize out-of-county facilities. However, with this large amount of water comes difficulty for outside-county employees to travel easily and quickly throughout the county.

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<sup>1</sup> NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Services Regulation (DHSR), Licensed Facilities, Home Care Only, Home Care with Hospice, Home Health Only, and Home Health with Hospice Facilities (by County); <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/reports.htm>

In our petition, we utilized Google Earth to find approximate mileage and driving time from the office to the most populous townships among adults aged 65 and over. The closest hospice office is Amedisys located in Washington County, and this office is over 64 miles away from the Lake Landing Township, which is the most populous township in Hyde County. That means this hospice employees have to drive approximately 1 hour and 12 minutes (one way) to give care to residents in this township. The other two hospice offices, located in Beaufort and Martin, are located even further away.

### **Demographics among the Senior Population**

An analysis of the Hyde County population reveals a strong projected growth for those aged 65+. The increasing elderly population in Hyde County is essential to note because the majority of hospice patients are 65 years of age or older.

According to Claritas data ran by the Applicant, the 2017 estimated total population in Hyde County is projected to be 5,503. Of the 5,503 projected population, 1,038 (or 18.86%) are projected to be 65 and over. To compare, there were only 875 people aged 65 and over in 2010. That means there was a growth of 163 people aged 65 and up, or almost 19%. The growing is expected to continue, as well, as an additional 111 people aged 65 and up is expected to populate this area in 2022. That is another growth of almost 12%.

Furthermore, according to figures from the NC Office of State Budget and Management, the population of persons age 65 and older in Hyde County is projected to grow from 875 at the time of the 2010 US Census to 1,410 by 2030, an increase of 66%.

### **Unique population will never meet current SMFP threshold**

As stated, the Proposed 2018 SMFP indicates no need determination for an additional hospice office in Hyde County. For a Hospice Home Care office need to be created in a specific county,

the county's deficit needs to be 90 or more, and the number of licensed home hospice offices located in the county per 100,000 population need to be three or less. However, keeping all other things equal in Table 13B for the Proposed 2018 SMFP, the county population would need to be over 20,000 and there would need to be 0 reported hospice patient deaths. That means that the current agencies presently able to serve Hyde County could stop serving this county and there would still not be a need for a hospice office. The Applicants feel that is not reasonable to the current residents.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Liberty Home Care Services seeks to expand hospice services in Hyde County and petitions for an adjusted need determination for an additional hospice home care agency in Hyde County in the 2018 SMFP. We have received strong support from the local community and feel this petition will identify various circumstances in Hyde County that necessitate the development of an additional hospice home care agency. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss this important issue.