

Heart’N Soul Hospice Special Need Petition

David Turner’s Remarks

Good afternoon. I am David Turner and I get hugs for a living, I am the Founder and CEO of Heart’N Soul Hospice , a minority owned and-focused hospice provider with current operations in Nashville, Tennessee and Seattle, Washington. I have been in the hospice industry for over 15 years, and prior to establishing Heart’N Soul, I owned and operated a hospice agency in Troy, Michigan. I am here to let you know about the petition our new entity, HNS of the Carolinas will be filing for an adjusted need determination in the 2024 SMFP for one hospice home care agency in Mecklenburg County focused on serving historically underserved racial and ethnic minorities.

It is safe to say that the healthcare disparities faced by minorities are not unique to Tenn, Wash or NC, indeed the recent pandemic showed that its a national problem.

When we applied for our 1st CON in Nash Tenn we did so because both my mentor Dr Andre Lee and longtime friend Pastor Sandy McClain were Nashville residents, the Washington application came about a year or so later because Nathan Yemeni, a longtime hospice social worker and Seattle native, heard about our work and was interested in bringing the

HNS message to his home state. Similarly, our local partner, Kevin Allison, who you will also hear from today, recognized the need here in Mecklenburg county and reached out to his former colleague Dr Lee to learn more... and so here we are.

For the last several months Kevin and I have met with several community leaders, providers, members of the clergy and other stakeholders in Mecklenburg county, and the overwhelming message we are receiving is how much an organization like HNS is needed and the powerful impact we can have upon approval.

As you will see when reading our petition, proportionally, Mecklenburg County's minority population uses hospice less often than they do statewide. The differences are significant and speak to how a county's population and hospice use rate can vary substantially from what is statewide. For example:

- Minorities represent 55% of Mecklenburg County's total population and 39% of all North Carolinians.
- Minorities also account for 41% of all senior citizens in Mecklenburg County as opposed to just 26% of seniors in North Carolina overall.

- The percentage of Black and Minority patients served by hospice in Mecklenburg County is not proportional to the county's older minority population.
- If the ratio of minority hospice patients to the total elderly minority population in Mecklenburg County were equal to the ratio for North Carolina as a whole, minorities would have represented 40% of all hospice admissions in Mecklenburg County last year, or more than 500 additional minority hospice patients than were admitted to hospice in the county in 2022.
- We believe that the key to reducing hospice disparities is a community-oriented approach. We dive into communities and help educate folks about hospice and build trust with residents and community leaders. We partner with and recruit from HBCUs to make sure our team is representative of the communities we serve now while also preparing the next generation of minority healthcare workers. These efforts all help to make sure patients and their families feel respected, heard, and valued during some of the hardest days of their lives.

The need for a minority owned and-focused hospice home care agency in Mecklenburg County is driven by a rapidly growing and aging minority

population—the single largest in the state with over 150,000 minorities over age 65, an underutilization of hospice by minorities relative to the state, and a historical resistance to hospice care. We believe that our petition clearly shows that this need exists and a special need determination in the 2024 SMFP for one hospice home care agency in Mecklenburg County focused on serving historically underserved racial and ethnic minorities will be a significant step forward in serving the underserved and reducing disparities in end-of-life care. Thank you for your time, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.