



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

ALMA S. ADAMS, PH.D.  
TWELFTH DISTRICT  
NORTH CAROLINA

November 15, 2023

The Honorable Roy Cooper  
Governor  
North Carolina Office of the Governor  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Cooper,

I write to bring your attention to a petition submitted by Heart'n Soul Hospice of the Carolinas to include an adjusted need determination in the *2024 State Medical Facilities Plan* for the addition of one hospice agency dedicated to meeting the needs of the historically underserved African American community and communities of color in Mecklenburg County.

Heart'n Soul Hospice is an African American-owned and focused hospice provider and would be the first minority-owned hospice in North Carolina. The agency has an effective model of care specific to the needs of racial and ethnic minorities with demonstrated success in Nashville, TN and Renton, WA. The agency is intentional in building relationships with marginalized communities through partnerships with HBCUs, churches, and community leaders. Dr. Kevin Allison, COO, is a native of Mecklenburg County and has deep ties in the county and the hospice and palliative care industry in the State.

During your time as Governor, the State of North Carolina has made great strides in implementing initiatives to address health disparities experienced by racial and ethnic minorities. Mecklenburg County issued a 2020 *Proclamation Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis*, followed by a concentrated effort and funding to better serve the needs of these communities. This work must extend to every sector of health care, including hospice care.

Every person deserves dignified end-of-life care with a team that not only has the cultural competency to know the unique needs and values of different cultures regarding death, but also understands the history of medical discrimination, abuse and neglect experienced by marginalized communities that lead to the hesitancy to use hospice services. The result of these unmet needs is demonstrated by the severe underuse of hospice services by Black and brown communities compared to their white counterparts in Mecklenburg County and the State.

Heart'n Soul Hospice's petition was denied by the State Health Coordinating Council, which determined that there is no demonstrated need. I am deeply disappointed by the Council's decision and disregard for the clear documented need for minority-focused care. As the petition comes across your desk for final decision, I urge your attention and sincere consideration of this petition and its implications for the underserved and marginalized communities in our State.

Sincerely,

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress