

## John Bardini Remarks for July 23, 2025

Thank you and Good Afternoon. I am John Bardini, President of Raleigh Radiology, a multispecialty group of Radiologists who serve Wake County and nearby communities. We have served Wake County for more than four decades.

Raleigh Radiology is requesting the State Health Coordinating Council to modify the Proposed *2026 State Medical Facilities Plan (2026 SMFP)* to include a **special geographic policy for MRI in Wake County**. The policy would provide a mechanism for MRI providers in Wake County to address a unique and unanticipated result of changes in MRI CON law (SL 2023-7) that take effect in November 2026.

- This would be a one-time policy, would affect only the 2026 SMFP and would prevent a major disruption in continuity of care for about 8,000 people who depend on Raleigh Radiology Blue Ridge MRI for low cost, ACR-accredited MRI scans.
- We spoke at other hearings this summer, asking for a special need adjustment to Chapter 15 of the SMFP restricted to applicants who provided fixed MRI services in 2024 through legacy service agreements that terminated effective 2025 and the need would be assigned to the January 2026 batch.
- After listening to feedback, we are changing our request to a policy change. A Policy would be more inclusive, more directly address the problem and could result in a quicker resolution. Four other Wake County MRI providers are at risk of a similar service interruption. Because the proposed policy could involve no net change in fixed MRI units in Wake County, the proposed Policy would avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Raleigh Radiology offers MRI services at 9 locations. Akumin- a Florida MRI company, owns the equipment and provides technologists at 6 of those, including our Blue Ridge facility. Through a series of regulatory interpretations, Akumin has sole rights to own the equipment. Raleigh Radiology cannot offer MRI services at those locations without the Akumin equipment. The Akumin Blue Ridge MRI equipment resides inside Raleigh Radiology Blue Ridge diagnostic center. The arrangement worked ok until early this year.
- In January 2025, Akumin dropped 9 days per week -- 90 hours--of MRI service across several Raleigh Radiology sites. Raleigh Radiology ensured patients were not

affected, by rescheduling them to other sites. We extended hours to include evenings and weekends to provide timely patient care.

- In May 2025, we received notification that Akumin will terminate services at Blue Ridge effective November 20, 2025, the date for contract renewal. Because Akumin owns the CON and the fixed magnet, Raleigh Radiology cannot offer MRI at Blue Ridge after that date. If nothing changes, 8,000 patients will lose service.
- The Raleigh Radiology Blue Ridge Akumin equipment is Grandfathered and not subject to CON rules. We believe Akumin intends to move its grandfathered rights outside of Wake County. This could affect you, or one of your family members or friends. MRI is essential to evaluate causes and inform treatment for diseases that affect soft tissue –brain, liver, muscles, etc. It is a standard of care. Without these scans and insight, these 8,000 patients may not receive the care they need.
- 950 referring providers have trusted Blue Ridge for their patients’ MRI exams to date this year. They rely on Raleigh Radiology to deliver high-value care that supports decisions in each patient’s healthcare journey. Without Raleigh Radiology at Blue Ridge, these patients would need to be absorbed into an already overburdened outpatient MRI system, further straining its limited capacity.
- This is a unique one time problem that will go away by 2027 because of changes in the CON law for MRI in Wake County. For 2026, we are asking you to give Wake County a bridge, modify the Proposed 2026 SMFP to include a special new Policy for Wake County and assign it to the first batch in January of 2026.
- The single MRI allocated in the SMFP is not sufficient to ensure proper patient care in Wake County. The batch for that MRI in Wake County does not open until July 2026, which will be too late to make an impact on affected patients. The current available CON in the 2026 SMFP is also not a sure option. It is part of a competitive batch, and the outcome would likely not be announced until November 2026 and an appeal could put it in suspension indefinitely.
- The problem will technically end November 21, 2026, when a CON to own an MRI in Wake County will no longer be required,
- We will include suggested wording for the policy in our petition. Given these unique conditions, we are asking the SHCC to see this crucial need and consider either modifying the Proposed 2026 SMFP to include a special need for one additional fixed MRI scanner in Wake County and assign it to the first batch in January of 2026, or to include a policy in the plan in order to ensure residents in Wake County receive the medical care they deserve.

- Raleigh Radiology will be submitting a petition today in the required format.
- Thank you for your time and attention, I will now answer any of your questions.