

**Technology and Equipment Committee
Agency Report
Petition to Add Need Determination for
Special Allocation of a Gamma Knife in
Western North Carolina (HSA I, II, III)
2020 State Medical Facilities Plan**

Petitioner:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority
d/b/a Atrium Health
P.O. Box 32861
Charlotte, NC 28232-2861

Contact:

Elizabeth V. Kirkman
Assistant Vice President, Strategic Services Group
Elizabeth.kirkman@atriumhealth.org

Request:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority d/b/a Atrium Health (Atrium) requests a special allocation for one gamma knife unit to meet needs of the western portion of the state (Health Service Areas (HSA) I, II, & III) in the *2020 State Medical Facilities Plan (SMFP)*.

Background Information:

As reported in the 2019 SMFP, there are two Gamma Knives operational in North Carolina. One is located at Wake Forest Baptist Hospital located in Winston-Salem in the western portion of the state (HSAs I, II & III). The other is located at Vidant Hospital located in Greenville in the eastern portion of the state (HSAs IV, V, & VI). In Federal Fiscal Year 2017, a total of 621 gamma knife procedures were performed in North Carolina. Of those, 457 were performed on the Gamma Knife located in Winston-Salem in the western portion of the state (HSAs I, II, and III).

Chapter Two of the SMFP allows for “[a]nyone who finds that the North Carolina State Medical Facilities Plan policies or methodologies, or the results of their application, are inappropriate may petition for changes or revisions. Such petitions are of two general types: those requesting changes in basic policies and methodologies, and those requesting adjustments to the need projections.” The SMFP annual planning process and timeline allow for submission of petitions for changes to policies and methodologies in the spring and petitions requesting adjustments to need projections in the summer. It should be noted that any person might submit a certificate of need (CON) application for a need determination in the Plan. The CON review could be competitive and there is no guarantee that the petitioner would be the approved applicant.

The standard methodology in the SMFP incorporates a geographic accessibility criterion for two planning regions. The eastern region (HSAs I, II, & III) and the western region (HSAs IV, V, & VI) make up the Gamma Knife planning regions. The two Gamma Knife planning regions have assured equal access for Gamma Knife services in the state.

Analysis/Implications:

The SMFP does not provide specific guidelines for a need methodology pertaining to Gamma Knives. The latest device was approved for operation in 2003. Petitioners request to create a special allocation of one Gamma Knife in the western portion of the state. They did not make a case for a methodology policy change that would have a statewide effect. Petitioners request centered around three main subjects: a high incident rate of predominant brain conditions that are treated by Gamma Knife and other radiosurgery devices; limited access to a Gamma Knife; and the superiority of Gamma Knife to alternative procedures.

Agency Recommendation:

Given available information submitted by the March 21, 2019 deadline, and in consideration of factors discussed above, the agency recommends denial of the Petitioner's request for special allocation of a Gamma Knife in HSAs I, II, & III in the 2020 SMFP. The request made by Atrium Health does not meet the spring petition guidelines as outlined in Chapter 2 of the SMFP. Spring petitions are dedicated to changes in basic policies and methodologies. Special allocation of equipment will fall under summer petitions which allows adjustments to need determinations.