
Technology and Equipment Committee

Recommendations to the N. C. State Health Coordinating Council

September 28, 2022

The Technology and Equipment Committee held its last meeting of the year on September 14. The following is an overview of the Committee's recommendations for consideration by the SHCC for Chapter 17 of the 2023 Plan.

Cardiac Catheterization

The Committee received three petitions regarding cardiac catheterization equipment.

UNC Blue Ridge petitioned for an adjusted need determination for one unit of shared fixed cardiac catheterization equipment in Burke County. The Agency received no comments regarding this petition. The Petitioner is under contract with a vendor for cardiac catheterization services. Under a settlement agreement, the leased mobile unit was approved to report as a fixed unit because it is in the hospital. As a result, Burke County's single unit of cardiac catheterization equipment has been treated as 'fixed' in the *SMFP*. Therefore, application of Methodology 1 did not result in a need determination for an additional fixed unit for the County. In support of its petition, the Petitioner cited two priors' petitions, approved by the SHCC, which were based on similar facts. Given the unique history and ownership status of the existing equipment, the Agency found it appropriate to use Methodology 2 to determine the need for a unit of shared fixed equipment. The Agency recommended approval of the petition for an adjusted need determination for one unit of shared fixed cardiac catheterization equipment to be developed in Burke County. The Committee concurred with the Agency's recommendation.

Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center requested an adjusted need determination for one unit of shared fixed cardiac catheterization equipment for the Brunswick County service area. The Agency received no comments regarding this petition. The only cardiac catheterization services in the county are provided on mobile equipment at Novant Health Brunswick. The Petitioner demonstrated that a large proportion of residents of Brunswick County migrate to New Hanover County for cardiac catheterization services. Based on the methodology, and -patient migration, Brunswick County showed sufficient utilization to support the need for an additional unit of shared fixed cardiac catheterization equipment. The Agency recommended approval of the petition to add a need determination for one unit of shared fixed cardiac catheterization equipment for the Brunswick County service area. The Committee concurred with the Agency's recommendation.

Novant Health New Hanover Medical Center requested the removal of the need determination for one unit of fixed cardiac catheterization equipment for the New Hanover County service area. The Agency received one comment in opposition to this petition. Novant Health New Hanover is the only provider of cardiac catheterization services in New Hanover County. The Petitioner stated that patient migration from Brunswick County triggered the need for additional cardiac catheterization equipment in New Hanover County. The Agency has no data on patient origin for cardiac catheterization to enable more specific projections. Moreover, the utilization data supported the need determination generated by the standard methodology. The Agency recommended denial of the petition to remove the need determination for a unit of fixed cardiac catheterization equipment for the New Hanover County service area. The Committee concurred with the Agency's recommendation.

Data Updates

Since the Proposed 2023 SMFP updates to the draft tables did not change the need determinations for cardiac catheterization equipment. There are need determinations for one fixed cardiac catheterization unit in Johnston, New Hanover, Orange and Wayne Counties. However, approval of the petitions would add additional need determinations for one unit of shared fixed equipment each in Brunswick County and Burke County.

Gamma Knives

The Committee received no petitions and no comments regarding gamma knife equipment. The SMFP has no need determination methodology for Gamma Knives. Therefore, there are no draft need determinations.

Linear Accelerators

The Committee received one petition regarding linear accelerators.

WakeMed submitted a petition for an adjusted need determination to add a LINAC in Service Area 20, which consists of Franklin and Wake counties. The Agency received two comments in opposition and three letters of support for this petition. The Petitioner's rationale for this request was based on two primary factors. First, WakeMed recently instituted an oncology program. Also, WakeMed is a major provider of medical care to minority and historically underserved populations in terms of total patient encounters. However, data is not yet available to quantify whether WakeMed's program provides greater access to oncology services to minority and underserved populations, given its recent implementation. The Agency was inclined to recommend denial of the petition based upon the overall utilization of LINACs in the service area, but withheld its

recommendation and opted to defer to the expertise of the Committee to determine whether a LINAC is considered standard of care for an oncology program. The Committee found that LINAC is standard of care. Thus, the Committee recommended approval of the petition for one LINAC in Service Area 20.

Data Updates

Since the Proposed 2023 SMFP there have been updates to the draft tables. There are no need determinations for LINACs anywhere in the state. If the SHCC approves the petition, there would be a need determination for one LINAC in Service Area 20.

Lithotriptors

The Committee received no petitions and no comments regarding lithotripsy equipment. Application of the methodology based on data and information currently available results in no need determinations for lithotriptors.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

The Committee received three petitions regarding Magnetic Resonance Imaging equipment.

EmergeOrtho requested an adjusted need determination for an additional fixed MRI scanner in Caldwell County. There Agency received no comments regarding this petition. In the last five years, the Caldwell County service area demonstrated an overall positive trend in the numbers of MRI procedures, but utilization has fluctuated. The Petitioner's data did not show sufficient growth to support an additional fixed MRI scanner. Also, Caldwell County's declining population is not likely to support the necessary procedures required for an additional fixed MRI scanner. However, the Petition showed that a large percentage of Caldwell County patients went to neighboring counties for MRI services, presumably because the mobile services offered were not sufficient. The Agency recommended denial of the Petition. However, the Committee found the issue of patient migration to be compelling and approved the Petition.

Novant Health and MedQuest Associates submitted a joint petition requesting a special need determination for two new mobile MRI scanners. **Carolina Neurosurgery and Spine Associates** submitted a petition to request an adjusted need determination for one mobile MRI scanner to serve HSA III. The Agency received no comments regarding these petitions. Because the requests were similar, the Agency chose to prepare a single report in response to both petitions. A summer petition is required to place a need in the Plan. There is no methodology to determine the need for mobile MRI equipment. The service area for mobile MRI scanners is statewide. In the last five reporting years, the number of mobile MRI procedures has consistently increased statewide and utilization of mobile

scanners is high. Upon review of all available information submitted, the Agency recommended the following: denial of both petitions and approval of a need determination for three additional mobile MRI scanners for the statewide service area in the 2023 SMFP. The Committee concurred with the Agency's recommendation.

Data Updates

Since the Proposed 2022 SMFP there have been updates to the draft tables. The projected need determinations for one MRI scanner each remain in Brunswick, Cleveland, Duplin, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Stanly, and Wake counties, as well as one each in the multi-county service areas of Durham/Caswell and Pitt/Greene/Hyde/Tyrrell. The staff recommends removal of the need determination in Randolph County because it is an artifact of the calculations in the methodology that was caused by the opening of a new facility in 2019. If the SHCC approves the Committee's recommendations, there will be an additional need determination for one fixed MRI in Caldwell County and three mobile MRI scanners statewide.

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scanners

The Committee received one petition regarding PET scanners.

Alliance HealthCare Services requested a need determination for one dedicated cardiac mobile PET scanner. The Agency received one letter in support of the petition. Mobile PET scanners have a statewide service area. The SMFP has no methodology for mobile PET scanners, so a summer petition is the approved route to show the need for additional scanners. The Petitioner noted the availability of mobile generators for tracers and the validity of PET for diagnosis of cardiac problems. However, the Petition provided no data to show that adequate cardiac PET services were not being provided. The availability of a resource is not sufficient to assess whether there is an unmet need for that resource. Considering all available information and comments submitted by the deadline, the Agency recommended denial of this petition. The Committee concurred with the Agency's recommendation.

Data Updates

Since the Proposed 2023 SMFP there have been updates to the draft tables. The projected need determinations for dedicated fixed PET scanners remain in HSA I and HSA II. If the SHCC approves the Committee's recommendations, there will be no additional need determinations added.

Recommendation for Chapter 17, Technology and Equipment

The Committee recommends that the current assumptions, methodologies and draft tables for cardiac catheterization equipment, gamma knives, linear accelerators, lithotriptors, MRI

scanners, and PET scanners be accepted for the Final 2023 Plan. The Committee also recommends that the SHCC authorize the staff to update all narratives, tables and need determinations for the Final 2023 Plan as new and corrected data are received.