

February 24, 2023

North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council
809 Ruggles Drive
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council:

I am writing to support the petition submitted by Long Term Care Management Services, LLC d/b/a Liberty Healthcare and Rehabilitation Services (“Liberty”) for a Policy to be added to the 2023 SMFP, Policy ESRD-4, which will allow for the development or expansion of a kidney disease treatment center at a skilled nursing facility

I am the Medical Director of Case Management for WakeMed Health and Hospitals. WakeMed is a three-hospital system in Wake County that discharges over 100,000 patients each year. Among those patients are many who require skilled nursing level of care after their acute care episode.

One of the biggest discharge planning challenges at WakeMed involves patients who require skilled nursing care and need dialysis after they come into the hospital. Coordination of community resources between outpatient dialysis centers and the skilled nursing facility location is typically required in order to create a safe discharge plan. It can be challenging to find placement at outpatient centers for skilled nursing facility residents needing dialysis due to the need to find an open SNF bed and an available dialysis slot nearby. Also, many skilled nursing communities do not accept these higher acuity residents due to the travel demands and associated costs, and the outpatient centers have limited capability to support patient comorbidities. This often leads to patients experiencing an extended length of stay in the hospital or a possible re-admission after discharge.

Establishing an on-site dialysis model within a SNF would result in patients discharging from the hospital sooner, re-admit to the hospital less, allow patients to recover more quickly after treatment, and achieve a higher quality of life.

I strongly encourage you to approve the Liberty Policy ESRD-4 petition.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Christy DeLaire-Henry

Christy DeLaire-Henry, MD
Medical Director, Case Management
WakeMed Health and Hospitals