

UNC Health Johnston

Acute Care Bed Special Need Petition

2024 SMFP

Tommy Williams' Public Hearing Presentation

Good afternoon. I am Tommy Williams, President and CEO of UNC Health Johnston. I started my career in healthcare here in the Triangle area 40 years ago as a Respiratory Therapist. Today in my role at UNC Health Johnston, I am responsible for ensuring that we have the capacity we need to care for all our patients, including our growing inpatient population with its increasing acuity and significant resource requirements. Last year, we filed a petition to request an additional 24 acute care beds for Johnston County, but we were turned down. So I am here again this year to let you know that we are filing another petition for an adjusted need determination for 24 acute care beds in Johnston County in the 2024 SMFP.

I will not take time today to go over all the data and statistics that you can see in our petition, but I did want to attend this public hearing to let you hear the request in my own words, and to express to you the best I can why I believe additional beds are needed in Johnston County.

Let me start by acknowledging that while we dealt with the impacts of COVID at our health system just like everyone else, and I recognize the impact that the pandemic has had on health planning efforts, particularly for statewide methodologies like the acute care bed methodology in the SMFP. But I also think it's important to understand that while we are technically asking for an "adjusted" need determination, the acute care bed need determinations in the Proposed 2024 SMFP are already "adjusted." Specifically, they use the time period from 2015 to 2019 as the basis to project future need in each service area, instead of using the most recent four years, as the standard methodology prescribes. We certainly understand the reason for that and do not object to that approach on the statewide level. However, that adjustment means that some service areas have higher growth rates than would otherwise be used, meaning that the methodology says that more beds are needed than it would otherwise. For Johnston County, on the other hand, this adjustment means that we have a lower growth rate than would otherwise be used, meaning that we are showing less of a need for beds than what we believe is truly needed.

If we simply asked the SHCC to use the last four years of growth, like the standard methodology calls for, Johnston County would show a need for 42 additional acute care beds. But we are not asking for that, in part because we do recognize that the growth reflected in at least one of the

historical periods may have been higher than normal because of the pandemic. But we also do believe that we have experienced real growth, apart from the impact of COVID, which we outline in detail in our petition. I'll mention just a few highlights:

- This Council approved a second cath lab for Johnston County in the 2023 SMFP, we applied for it and were the only applicant. We hope to be approved and initiate it quickly. Along with that capacity expansion, we've recently added a second interventional cardiologist, who has helped us expand our PCI program, including our STEMI program, and of course, many of these patients will be inpatients.
- Within the last two years, we obtained certification as a Primary Stroke Center, meaning that patients experiencing a stroke don't have to bypass our hospital or be taken to Wake County for care.
- Within the last year, we initiated continuous renal replacement therapy (CRRT), a highly specialized form of dialysis, allowing us to keep more patients in our ICU instead of transferring them to a facility in Wake County.
- Within the past year, we began performing inpatient spine surgery cases, which will also increase the number of patients we can keep close to home in Johnston County, and that number continues to grow each month.

- Recently, in conjunction with UNC Health Rex and our telemedicine program, we've expanded the scope of Level II neonates we can keep at Johnston—and while those patient days are excluded from the methodology, it also allows us to keep their mothers in our hospital as well, which is increasing the patient days in our OB beds.
- Then in just a few months, we'll begin performing atrial closure cardiovascular procedures, which we project will also increase the number of inpatients at the hospital.

I'll stop there, but please see our petition for more data. The bottom line is that these programs have already had an impact on the acuity of patients we treat. While all the hospitals in the area increased their patient acuity, as measured by Case Mix Index, or CMI, our rate of increase was higher than Duke Raleigh or WakeMed, and our CMI in 2022 was higher than WakeMed Cary. I mention this not because this is a competition about who can treat the sickest patients, but to let you know that we are working hard to ensure that we can provide more care to patients in Johnston County, but we need more beds to do that.

In next year's Proposed SMFP, there is a need for more beds in Wake, Orange and Durham counties, in fact a combined total of 134 beds, and that is certainly appropriate. But we believe that Johnston County, which

is growing faster than any of those counties, also needs more inpatient capacity for our patients. The standard, unadjusted methodology shows a need for 42 more beds, but the adjustment takes all of them away. We simply ask you to allocate 24 beds for Johnston County in the 2024 SMFP.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.