

July 23, 2025

State Health Coordinating Council (SHCC)
North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation
Healthcare Planning and Certificate of Need Section
2704 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2704

RE: Cone Health Petition for an Adjusted Need Determination in SA 12, in Guilford County

Dear Members of the SHCC,

I am writing to express my support for the petition filed by Moses Cone Health System (Cone Health) to create an adjusted need determination in the 2026 State Medical Facilities Plan (2026 SMFP) for one additional linear accelerator (LINAC) in Service Area 12, to be designated for a LINAC provider in Guilford County with high LINAC utilization. As a physician who regularly treats cancer patients, I can strongly state that the petition would positively impact patients' ability to receive timely, coordinated cancer care in their preferred treatment location and enhance access to lifesaving healthcare resources throughout the broader community.

Under the current methodology, there is limited recognition for situations in which one facility in a service area operates at high capacity while other providers experience much lower utilization. This creates a significant barrier to expanding capacity where it is most needed, often leading to delays in care with the potential for negative effects on patient health outcomes. As the primary provider of conventional and specialized radiation therapy services in Service Area 12, Cone Health's Cancer Center at Wesley Long represents the fourth-highest provider by overall volume in North Carolina. For years, the facility has performed well above the state's methodology threshold and, as a result, it faces ongoing capacity constraints that make it increasingly difficult to support the critical demand for services or accommodate necessary interruptions such as updating equipment.

As a physician, I understand the importance of coordinated cancer care and have observed firsthand the impact of healthcare access challenges on the wellbeing of my patients. Without the approval of this petition, patients will continue to face extended wait times for treatment initiation, reduced flexibility in scheduling follow-up treatments, and increased travel burden if needing to seek more immediate care elsewhere. These circumstances add unnecessary stress during an already challenging time and can lead to fragmented care if treatment is less comprehensive or must be provided across multiple locations. The pathway created by an adjusted need determination would ensure patients can receive radiation treatment close to home, improving both access and outcomes while reducing the financial and emotional burden on patients and their families. Moreover, the stipulations restricting eligibility to existing providers with demonstrated high utilization promote safety and quality in the delivery of radiation therapy services.

While this letter may resemble those signed by others in the community, this should not detract from the fact that I fully support Cone Health's petition and strongly urge you to consider its approval.

Sincerely,

Signature:

Name:

Specialty/Department:



Matthew C. Wakefield, MD

Surgery, Medical Director Breast Cancer Program,
Cone Health