



December 21, 2020

By Email: walter.mackie@state.ma.us

Walter Mackie, J.D.
Licensure Unit Coordinator
Division of Health Care Facility Licensure & Certification
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street
Marlborough, MA 01752

Re: Shriners Hospitals for Children-Springfield
Essential Health Services Notification Letter

Dear Mr. Mackie,

This 90 day notice is submitted pursuant to 105 CMR 130.122(B).

Shriners Hospitals for Children—Springfield (the “Hospital”) is a pediatric specialty hospital that serves the needs of pediatric patients for a range of orthopaedic, neuromuscular, cleft lip and palate, urology, and other specialty conditions. The Hospital provides services to patients on both an inpatient and an outpatient basis.

The Hospital has made the decision to close its 20-bed Pediatric Inpatient Acute Rehabilitation Service (“Inpatient Rehabilitation Service”) due to low utilization.

The health and safety of our patients, families, employees, staff and volunteers always comes first. Accordingly, the Hospital has been measured and cautious in our delivery of services, as the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to evolve. Due to their age and physical challenges, many of our Inpatient Rehabilitation patients are especially vulnerable to complications from COVID-19. The Inpatient Rehabilitation Service is an intensive program including a minimum of three hours of rehabilitation contact hours per day. Given our special patients, and the intensity of the program, the Hospital determined that it would temporarily refrain from accepting Inpatient Rehabilitation Service patients.

As we considered plans to once again accept Inpatient Rehabilitation Service patients, the Hospital considered the service’s utilization prior to March 2020. From March 1, 2019 to February 29, 2020, Inpatient Rehabilitation operated at an average daily census of 1.65. The Hospital has determined that this is not sustainable. Therefore, we have made the difficult decision to discontinue the Inpatient Rehabilitation Service.

Discontinuation of Inpatient Rehabilitation Service has been determined by the Department to constitute the discontinuation of an essential health service pursuant to the Department's Hospital Licensure Regulations. We will, of course, follow the regulatory process required for such discontinuation, including the filing of this notice 90 days in advance of discontinuation, which is anticipated to take place on March 22, 2021.

This closure will not cause an interruption in our inpatient Pediatric Services and Ambulatory Care Services, including outpatient rehabilitation therapy. Given the low Inpatient Rehabilitation Service utilization rates, the anticipated impact on the Hospital's patients is low, and the Hospital will minimize any impact by working to find appropriate placements for patients requiring inpatient rehabilitation services, as we did prior to the licensure of the Inpatient Rehabilitation Service.

Shriners Hospitals for Children - Springfield remains committed to our mission of providing the highest quality care for children with neuromusculoskeletal conditions and other special healthcare needs within a compassionate, family-centered and collaborative environment, to provide for the education of physicians and other healthcare professionals, and to conduct research to discover new knowledge that improves quality of care and quality of life of children and families regardless of the ability of a patient or family to pay. We welcome any questions or concerns you might have and will work with the Department of Public Health throughout the process.

Sincerely,



Timothy John Luttrell
Chairman, Board of Governors



H. Lee Kirk, FACHE
Hospital Administrator

cc: Health Policy Commission (By Email)
Office of the Attorney General (By Email)
Center for Health Information and Analysis (By Email)
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (By Mail)
Coalition of Western Massachusetts Hospitals/Insurer (By Email)