

February 1, 2021

Via E-Mail

Lara Szent-Gyorgyi, MPH  
Director, Determination of Need Program  
Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02511

Re: Anna Jaques Hospital – Application to Add Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Beds Pursuant to Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Determination of Need Approvals Related to COVID-19

Dear Ms. Szent-Gyorgyi:

Anna Jaques Hospital, located at 25 Highland Avenue, Newburyport, MA 01950 (“the Applicant”) respectfully requests that the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) approve the addition of four (4) child and adolescent inpatient psychiatric beds at the Applicant’s satellite, Amesbury Health Center, located at 24 Morrill Place, Amesbury, MA 01913, (“AHC”) to address the needs of its patient panel (“Proposed Project”) in accordance with the Department of Public Health’s Updated Guidance for Requesting Determination of Need (DoN) Approval for projects related to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency, issued on November 24, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

The Applicant currently holds a license to operate 12 child and adolescent inpatient psychiatric beds at AHC for the care of patients ages four through seventeen. The need for expanded capacity of inpatient psychiatric beds for children and adolescents has increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for those individuals with a pre-existing mental health condition. Social issues such as school closures, interruptions to daily routines, reduced social interactions, reduced activity, and the effects of parental anxiety or fear are contributing to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and stress-related symptoms in children and adolescents.<sup>2</sup> Vulnerable populations, including those with pre-existing mental health conditions, are at higher risk for experiencing more severe episodes of mental illness as a result of the pandemic, requiring the inpatient services that will be expanded through the Proposed Project.<sup>3</sup> Increased capacity of inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric beds will improve access to a vulnerable population, contributing to better outcomes.

The increased capacity of inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric beds will additionally contribute to reduced Emergency Department (“ED”) boarding times for these patients. Patients presenting to the ED requiring an inpatient psychiatric admission historically face long wait times

<sup>1</sup> Updated Guidance: Requesting Determination of Need (DoN) Approval for projects related to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency (Nov.24, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Jörg M. Fegert et al., *Challenges and burden of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVI-19) pandemic for child and adolescent mental health: a narrative review to highlight clinical and research needs in the acute phase and the long return to normality*, 14:20 CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL HEALTH (2020); Nicole Racine et al., *Child and adolescent mental illness during COVID-19: A rapid review*, 292 PSYCHIATRY RES. 113307 (Oct. 2020), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7363598/>.

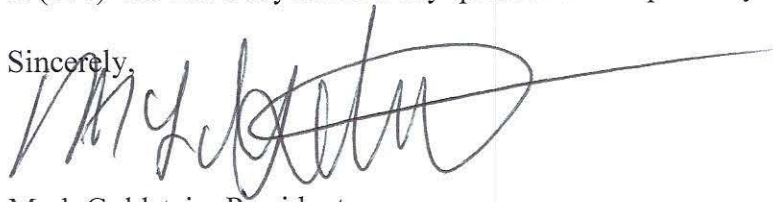
<sup>3</sup> Fegert et al., *supra* note 2.

and experience boarding in the ED due to limited capacity of inpatient psychiatric beds, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue, especially for children and adolescents.<sup>4</sup> These capacity constraints result in delayed care and suboptimal patient experience, as these patients are not being cared for in the appropriate setting.<sup>5</sup> Through the Proposed Project, the Applicant's patient panel will have improved access to care in the appropriate setting, contributing to improved outcomes.

Accordingly, to address the needs of its patient panel, the Applicant seeks to expand its existing inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric unit at AHC by 4 beds, for a total of 16 licensed inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric beds. The cost associated with the Proposed Project is \$395,000 which includes renovation to accommodate the additional psychiatric beds.

Thank you for our attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me or Andrew Levine, Esq. at (617) 462-2676 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Goldstein', written over a horizontal line.

Mark Goldstein, President

cc: S. Boyd, Esq., BILH  
M. Schuyler, BILH  
M. Taberner, Esq., BILH  
A. Levine, Esq.  
S. Lohnes, Esq., DPH  
R. Rodman, Esq., DPH  
J. Ross, DMH

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<sup>4</sup> Lynn E. DeLisi, *COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on psychiatric care in the United States*, 289 PSYCHIATRIC RES. 113069 (2020); *Hospital Emergency Room Wait Times Increasing for People in Need of Psychiatric Care*, MASSLIVE (Oct. 11, 2020), <https://www.masslive.com/news/2020/10/er-wait-times-up-for-psychiatric-patients-needing-admittance.html>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*