

December 23, 2020

Via E-Mail

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

Re: Baystate Medical Center, Inc. d/b/a Baystate Medical Center – Application to Add Adolescent and Pediatric Psychiatric Beds Pursuant to Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Determination of Need Approvals Related to COVID-19

Dear Ms. Szent-Gyorgyi:

Baystate Medical Center, Inc. (“the Applicant”) respectfully requests that the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) approve the addition of an inpatient adolescent and pediatric psychiatric unit consisting of 12 beds at Baystate Medical Center, located at 759 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01199, 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 28 inpatient psychiatric beds. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a greater need for inpatient psychiatric services, as resources are spread thin in hospital Emergency Departments (“EDs”) and individuals requiring an inpatient psychiatric bed face extended ED boarding times.<sup>2</sup> These capacity constraints delay care for a vulnerable population.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, there is an increased awareness of negative effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having on child and adolescent mental health due to quarantine orders, remote learning, and destabilization in families.<sup>4</sup> For example, at least one study has found increased prevalence of depression and anxiety in children as a result of the current pandemic.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the Applicant seeks to add an inpatient adolescent and pediatric psychiatric unit, consisting of 12

<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> 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>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Karen Dineen Wagner, MD, PhD, *New Findings About Children’s Mental Health During COVID-19*, PSYCHIATRIC TIMES (Oct. 7, 2020), <https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/new-findings-children-mental-health-covid-19>. See also Shweta Singh et al., *Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations*, 293 PSYCHIATRY RES. 113429 (2020), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7444649/>.

<sup>5</sup> Wagner, *supra* note 4.

inpatient adolescent and pediatric psychiatric beds, to its license to respond to the needs of its patient population. Renovations to Baystate Medical Center to accommodate the Proposed Project are projected to be \$1,546,435.30.

Thank you for your 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,



Nancy Shendell-Falik, RN, MA  
President, Baystate Medical Center  
Senior Vice President, Hospital Operations, Baystate Health

cc: Andrew Levine, Esq.  
Sherman Lohnes, Esq., DPH  
Rebecca Rodman, Esq., DPH  
Janet Ross, DMH  
Vanessa L. Smith, Esq., Baystate