



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
Determination of Need Program  
250 Washington Street, Boston MA 02511

CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS  
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000  
[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)

February 9, 2021

Kevin Coughlin, President  
Beth Israel Deaconess Plymouth  
275 Sandwich Street  
Plymouth, MA 02360

RE: Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital - Plymouth - Application to Add Geriatric Psychiatric Beds Pursuant to Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Determination of Need Approvals Related to COVID-19

Dear Mr. Coughlin:

The Department received the notification above on February 4, 2021 to add five (5) inpatient geriatric psychiatric beds to its existing unit known as the Senior Behavioral Health Center ("SBHC") to address the needs of its patient panel ("Proposed Project").

The Applicant currently holds a license to operate 19 inpatient geriatric psychiatric beds at SBHC. More than one out of five adults over the age of 60 suffer from a mental or neurological disorder.<sup>1</sup> Older individuals with behavioral health disorders face unique challenges due to advanced age and existence of co-morbidities.<sup>2</sup> Individuals with behavioral health needs often face barriers to treatment, including extended wait times. Limited inpatient capacity results in patients boarding in the Emergency Department ("ED") until an inpatient psychiatric bed becomes available.<sup>3</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted existing capacity constraints, particularly for inpatient psychiatric beds.<sup>4</sup> Through the Proposed Project, the Applicant will improve access to inpatient geriatric psychiatric care in the appropriate setting, resulting in improved health outcomes.

<sup>1</sup>WHO, *Mental Health of Older Adults* (Dec. 12, 2017), available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*; Amy Fiske et al., *Depression in Older Adults*, 5 ANN. REV. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY 383 (2009), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2852580/>.

<sup>3</sup> Mark D. Pearlmutter, MD et al., *Analysis of Emergency Department Length of Stay for Mental Health Patients at Ten Massachusetts Emergency Departments*, 70 ANNALS EMERGENCY MED. 193 (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Eralm Bojdani et al., *COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact on Psychiatric Care in the United States*, 289 PSYCHIATRY RES. 113069 (2020), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2852580/>.

Accordingly, to address the needs of its patient panel, the Applicant seeks to expand its existing inpatient geriatric psychiatric service at SBHC by 5 beds, for a total of 24 licensed inpatient geriatric psychiatric beds. The cost associated with the Proposed Project is \$602,114.

After review, DPH has determined the need for the Proposed Project relates to the State of Emergency and therefore the DoN approval requirement is waived pursuant to the COVID-19 order. As a result, you may commence the Proposed Project.

Sincerely,



Lara Szent-Gyorgyi  
Director, Determination of Need

cc: Sherman Lohnes, Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification, DPH  
Rebecca Rodman, Senior Deputy General Counsel, DPH  
Elizabeth Kelley, Director Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality, DPH  
Margret Cooke, Deputy Commissioner, DPH  
Stephen Boyd, Esq. BILH  
Malisa Schuyler, BILH  
Andrew Levine, Esq  
Janet Ross, DMH

