



Via E-Mail

Feb 2, 2021

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

Re: Harrington Hospital - Application to Add Psychiatric Beds at  
Webster Campus Pursuant to Order of the Commissioner of Public  
Health Regarding Determination of Need Approvals Related to  
COVID-19

Dear Ms. Szent-Gyorgyi:

Pursuant to the Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Determination of Need Approvals Related to COVID-19 issued on March 24, 2020, and the 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, Harrington Hospital ("the Applicant") respectfully requests that the Department of Public Health ("DPH") approves the addition of 10 inpatient adult psychiatric beds, in combination with the existing 14-bed adult psychiatric unit (2 South, presently on Southbridge campus), all of which will be sited on the Webster campus, 340 Thompson Road, Webster, MA 01570 to address the needs of its patient panel ("Proposed Project").

On March 10, 2020, Governor Baker declared a State of Emergency in response to an outbreak of the novel coronavirus 2019 ("COVID-19").<sup>1</sup> As the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the

Determination of Need program have indicated, individuals with a psychiatric disorder are at higher risk for negative outcomes related to COVID-19.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, both the number of psychiatric patients requiring inpatient admissions and length of time boarding in Emergency Rooms have significantly increased during this public health crisis,<sup>3</sup> and the regional need, as well as the demand throughout the state, have surpassed available resources.

The cost associated with the Proposed Project is \$4,255,000 which includes construction and renovation to the space to accommodate 24 inpatient adult psychiatric beds (14 existing beds to be moved from Southbridge campus to Webster campus, plus 10 additional beds).

We thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact Harry Lemieux (508-765-3184) or me (508-765- 617-462-2676 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

<sup>1</sup> Order No. 591: Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19 (Mar. 10, 2020), <https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-591-declaration-of-a-state-of-emergency-to-respond-to-covid-19>.

<sup>2</sup> Updated Guidance: Requesting Determination of Need (DoN) Approval for projects related to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency (Nov.24, 2020). See also Maxime Taquet et al., *Bidirectional Associations Between COVID-19 and Psychiatric Disorder: Retrospective Cohort Studies of 62,354 COVID-19 Cases in the USA*, THE LANCET (Nov. 9, 2020), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30462-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30462-4/fulltext); Nirmita Panchal et al., *The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use*, KFF (Aug. 21, 2020), <https://www.kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>.

<sup>3</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>.

Sincerely,

Gregory Mirhej  
Vice President  
Behavioral Health Services

CC:  
Harry Lemieux, VP, Harrington Hospital  
Ed Moore, CEO, Harrington Hospital  
Tom Sullivan, CFO, Harrington Hospital  
Janet Ross, DMH  
Chris Hager, MassHealth