

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Office of Licensure and Certification
Staff Analysis

April 9, 2020

Carilion New River Valley Medical Center (3/30/2020)

Christiansburg, Virginia

Temporarily add 43 Beds at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center

Hospital

Carilion New River Valley Medical Center (“New River Valley”) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community hospital located in the town of Christiansburg (Montgomery County), Virginia. New River Valley is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Carilion Clinic, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Virginia non-stock corporation located in Roanoke, Virginia. New River Valley is located in Health Planning Region (“HPR”) III, Planning District (“PD”) 4.

Background

On March 12, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency throughout Virginia in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Subsequent to this declared state of emergency, on March 20, 2020, Governor Northam signed Executive Order 52 (“EO 52”) providing that notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1.1 of Chapter 4 of Title 32.1 of the Code of Virginia the State Health Commissioner (“Commissioner”), at his discretion, may authorize any general hospital or nursing home to increase licensed bed capacity as determined necessary by the Commissioner to respond to increased demand for beds resulting from COVID-19. Such beds authorized by the Commissioner under EO 52 would, notwithstanding Virginia Code § 32.1-132, constitute licensed beds that do not require further approval or the issuance of a new license

Per the 2018 data provided by Virginia Health Information (“VHI”), New River Valley operates an inventory of 146 licensed beds. New River Valley is taking all reasonable efforts to reduce inpatient census to free beds to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, including complying with the March 25, 2020 Order of Public Health Emergency 2.

Request

New River Valley cites an emergent need to expand bed capacity due to the sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care cases resulting from COVID-19 infection. Specifically, New River Valley requests authorization to temporarily add 43 beds. New River Valley currently projects the need for an additional 9 intensive care unit (“ICU”) beds, 24 medical/surgical beds that will act as progressive care unit (“PCU”) beds, and 10 medical/surgical beds. The requested beds will be added throughout the facility in the outpatient surgical area, the post-anesthesia care unit

(“PACU”) holding area, the PACU, and endoscopy area. The resulting bed configuration at New River Valley is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: New River Valley Requested Temporary Bed Inventory

Bed Type	Beds	Requested Additional Beds	Resulting Available Beds
Medical/Surgical	77	34	111
ICU	12	9	21
Psychiatric	36	0	36
Obstetric	16	0	16
Pediatric	5	0	5
Total/Average	146	43	189

Considerations

In determining whether a need exists for the requested additional bed capacity, the State Health Commissioner established the following factors for consideration, when applicable.

1. Ongoing efforts to increase the availability of existing beds, such as suspension of elective procedures:

New River Valley has made assurances that, in an effort to free up existing capacity, and in compliance with the March 25, 2020 Order of Public Health Emergency 2, they have cancelled all non-essential procedures and surgeries. Moreover, the hospital has published significant public notices and messaging regarding the appropriate use of the Emergency Department during the coronavirus pandemic.

2. The availability of professional and ancillary staff to provide care in the additional beds:

New River Valley states that staffing is being coordinated and directed by onsite Hospital incident command team and the Carilion System Staffing Branch incident command team, which is led by the Chief Nursing Officer. Hospital and Carilion Health System departments that have experienced low or no patient volumes have reported their staffing resources to the staffing branch. Educational competencies and orientations to staff the proposed beds will be addressed by the Staffing branch and Hospital incident command. DCOPN notes that this redeployment of staff will be made possible, in part, by the decision by New River Valley to cancel all non-essential procedures and surgeries

3. The availability of medical supplies and personal protection equipment in the facility:

All PPE and supply needs are being monitored and routinely communicated with the incident command team from the logistics branch of the Carilion incident command team. This branch is supporting the supply requirements of New River Valley.

4. The specific plan for increasing bed capacity:

New River Valley intends to add the beds in the outpatient surgical area, the PACU holding area, the PACU, and endoscopy area. Nineteen PCU beds will be added to the outpatient surgical area, five PCU beds will be added to the PACU holding area, and six PCU beds will be added to the PACU. Three ICU beds and ten medical/surgical beds will be added to the endoscopy area. While it is not addressed by New River Valley in their request, it is presumed that, in order to match the bed types elsewhere in the request, six of the PCU beds will act as ICU beds.

5. Where the beds will be located and the life safety code considerations of the location:

The requested beds will be added in the outpatient surgical area, the PACU holding area, the PACU, and endoscopy area. New River Valley provided a detailed explanation of how each proposed locations comports with fire and life safety codes.

6. The availability of beds at other community hospitals and nursing homes in the community:

Per the 2018 data provided by VHI, there are 464 licensed inpatient beds in PD 4 of which 354 are medical surgical beds and 36 are intensive care unit beds. The overall bed capacity data does not inherently take into account the extent to which, due to the rapid rate of infection of COVID-19, how many new cases may arise, and thereby overwhelm New River Valley's and the area's capacity to treat patients, thereby jeopardizing the quality of care for residents of PD 4. New River Valley's proposal increases their bed capacity by 29% and is a 9% increase in bed capacity in the planning district. Moreover, New River Valley's request represents a 75% increase in their ICU bed capacity and is a 25% increase in the ICU bed capacity in the planning district.

7. Other alternatives to adding bed capacity:

As discussed, given that the applicant has already provided assurances that they have suspended all elective procedures, as well as the difficulty in anticipating how many cases of COVID-19 may arise in PD 4, the addition of beds in space that has been freed up as a result of the cancelation of all non-essential procedures and surgeries represents the best option. New River Valley is part of a hospital system and their addition of licensed bed capacity is a part of the system's overall response to the need for additional capacity.

8. The current state of COVID-19 in the community:

At the time of this writing, the Virginia Department of Health reports that Virginia has 4,042 cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and 109 deaths.¹ To date, the Centers for

¹ <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>

Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 395,011 cases in the United States, with 12,754 deaths.² New River Health District currently reports 24 COVID-19 patients.

DCOPN Findings and Conclusions

New River Valley proposes to add temporarily 43 beds. These beds will be added in the outpatient surgical area, the PACU holding area, the PACU, and endoscopy area. DCOPN finds that, due to the sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care cases resulting from COVID-19 infection throughout the Commonwealth, New River Valley has an immediate need to temporarily add 43 beds. Furthermore, DCOPN finds that New River Valley's plan for training and shifting staff is a reasonable solution for staffing the requested beds. Additionally, DCOPN concludes that New River Valley's plan and ability to obtain equipment and supplies is reasonable within the confines of the current crisis. Moreover, DCOPN finds that New River Valley's plan to expand bed capacity in existing hospital space assures patient safety is maintained from a fire and life safety code perspective. DCOPN finds that in the absence of a temporary increase to bed capacity in the planning district, it is conceivable that the continued rise of COVID-19 cases could overwhelm the hospital's capacity to treat patients, thereby jeopardizing the quality of care for residents of PD 4, and limit the ability of health care providers adequately treat and limit the spread of the virus.

DCOPN Staff Recommendations

The Division of Certificate of Public Need recommends the **approval** of Carilion New River Valley Medical Center's request to temporarily add 43 beds at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center. DCOPN's recommendation is based on the following findings.

1. New River Valley has demonstrated that, due to the sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care cases resulting from COVID-19 infection, Carilion New River Valley Medical Center has an immediate need to add temporarily 43 beds.
2. Carilion New River Valley Medical Center's plan for training and shifting staff is a reasonable solution for staffing the requested beds.
3. Carilion New River Valley Medical Center's plan and ability to obtain equipment and supplies is reasonable within the confines of the current crisis.
4. Carilion New River Valley Medical Center's plan to expand bed capacity in existing hospital space assures patient safety is maintained from a fire and life safety code perspective.

² https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcases-in-us.html