

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Office of Licensure and Certification
Staff Analysis

April 17, 2020

Montgomery Regional Hospital, Inc. (4/10/2020)

LewisGale Hospital Montgomery

Blacksburg, Virginia

Temporarily add 38 Beds at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery

Hospital

Montgomery Regional Hospital, Inc. d/b/a LewisGale Hospital Montgomery (LGHM) is located in Blacksburg, Virginia in Planning District (PD) 4, Health Planning Region (HPR) III.

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), LGHM operates an inventory of 146 beds (**Table 1**). LGHM 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

LGHM 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, LGHM requests authorization to temporarily add 3 medical/surgical beds and 35 intensive care unit (ICU) beds. The requested beds will be located in the post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), the pre-op area, the endoscopy suite, and operating rooms. The resulting bed configuration at LGHM is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: LGHM Requested Temporary Bed Inventory

Bed Type	Beds	Requested Additional Beds	Resulting Available Beds
ICU	10	35	45
Med/Surg	119	3	122
Obstetric	17	0	17
Total	146	38	184

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:

LGHM 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 suspended all elective procedures that, if delayed, are not anticipated to cause harm to the patient.

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

LGHM states that HCA Virginia hospitals can utilize team members, both locally and across the state, that have been flexed due to low utilization in other portions of the health care system and have developed appropriate education to swiftly repurpose team members into needed areas to help support patient care efforts.

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

LGHM has not made assurances that it has sufficient access to available medical supplies and personal protection equipment (PPE) in the facility. Given that the availability of PPE is a State and National concern, LGHM contends that their supply chain professionals are working around the clock, and will have access to PPE commensurate with that of other acute care hospitals. The Virginia Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (VDMAC) has suggested moving toward the adoption of crisis standards of care to, in part, preserve available supplies.

4. The specific plan for increasing bed capacity:

LGHM intends to place the requested beds in the PACU, the pre-op area, the endoscopy suite, and operating rooms. Of the 35 requested ICU beds, 23 will be placed in the pre-op area, 6 will be placed in the PACU, and 6 will be placed in operating rooms. The 3 requested

medical/surgical beds will be placed in the endoscopy suite. All locations are on the ground floor of the hospital.

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

LGHM states that all bed will be equipped with oxygen and vacuum capabilities. Moreover, LGHM has provided assurances that the spaces will meet applicable life safety code requirements.

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 32 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 LGHM's, and the area's, capacity to treat patients, thereby jeopardizing the quality of care for residents of PD 4. LGHM's proposal increases their overall bed capacity by 26% and is an 8% increase in overall bed capacity in the planning district.

7. Other alternatives to adding bed capacity:

As discussed, given that the hospital has already provided assurances that they have suspended all of elective procedures, and the efforts taken by the hospital to maximize the number of available ICU beds to treat COVID-19 patients, as well as the difficulty in anticipating how many cases of COVID-19 may arise in PD 4, the addition of beds in existing space within the hospital represents the best option.

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 7,491 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and 231 deaths.¹ To date, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 632,548 cases in the United States, with 31,071 deaths.² The New River Health District currently reports 54 confirmed cases of patients with COVID-19, with another 48 patients in the surrounding jurisdictions.

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

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

Findings and Conclusions

LGHM proposes to add temporarily 38 beds, consisting of 3 medical/surgical beds and 35 ICU beds. The requested beds will be located in the PACU, the pre-op area, the endoscopy suite, and operating rooms. Due to the sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care cases resulting from COVID-19 infection throughout the Commonwealth, LGHM has an immediate need to temporarily add 38 beds. LGHM has demonstrated that the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases has created an emergent need for a temporary increase in bed capacity. 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.

Staff Recommendations

The staff recommends the **approval** of Montgomery Regional Hospital, Inc. d/b/a LewisGale Hospital Montgomery request to add temporarily 38 beds at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery. The staff's recommendation is based on the following findings.

1. LGHM has demonstrated that, due to the reasonable expectation of a sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care patients resulting from COVID-19 infection, LGHM has an immediate need to add temporarily 38 licensed inpatient beds.
2. LGHM's plan for training and shifting repurposed staff is a reasonable solution for staffing the additional beds.
3. LGHM's plan to expand bed capacity in existing hospital space assures patient safety is maintained from a fire and life safety code perspective.