

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Office of Licensure and Certification

Staff Analysis

April 24, 2020

Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center (4/22/2020)

Williamsburg, Virginia

Temporarily add 35 beds at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center

Hospital

Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center (WRMC) is located in Williamsburg, Virginia, which is in Health Planning Region (HPR) V, Planning District (PD) 21.

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.

According to the 2018 data provided by Virginia Health Information (VHI), WRMC operates an inventory of 145 licensed beds (**Table 1**). WRMC 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

WRMC 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, WRMC requests authorization to temporarily add 35 beds including 14 ICU beds and 21 medical/surgical beds. The requested beds will be distributed throughout WRMC, in spaces that are currently being utilized for patient care. The resulting bed configuration at WRMC is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Williamsburg Regional Medical Center's Requested Temporary Bed Inventory

Bed Classification	Licensed Beds	Requested Additional Beds	Resulting Available Beds
Adult ICU	16	14	30
Medical/Surgical	106	21	127
Obstetric	17	0	17
Medical Rehabilitation	6	0	6
Total	145	35	180

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:

WRMC 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, it has 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:

WRMC has made assurances that it has the necessary professional staff to provide care in the additional beds. WRMC will take a phased, sequenced approach to open additional ICU or medical/surgical beds on demand. As a system, Sentara Healthcare has developed alternate models of provider, nursing care, respiratory and other support services. The nursing care model will be expanded with registered nurses from the system resource pool as well as other Sentara Healthcare divisions.

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

WRMC has made assurances that it has sufficient access to available medical supplies and personal protection equipment (PPE) in the facility. WRMC has acquired additional PPE and supplies through alternate vendors over the past three months. Additionally, using CDC-approved methods, WRMC is reprocessing N95 masks and other PPE. 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:

WRMC requests authorization to temporarily add 35 beds, including 14 ICU beds and 21 medical/surgical beds. The requested beds will be distributed throughout WRMC, in spaces that are currently being utilized for patient care. The additional licensed beds will either be used to

care for COVID-19 patients directly or to supplement existing operations so that existing beds can be used for COVID-19 patients, depending on the nature and timing of patient demand.

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

As previously discussed, WRMC intends to distribute the requested beds throughout the existing hospital, in spaces that are currently being utilized for patient care. The beds are to be located in existing clinical care space that has 100% sprinkler and smoke detection coverage, and that are part of the hospital's existing life safety compartments and suites. Therefore, the spaces meet life safety code requirements for the type of patients or residents expected to occupy the space.

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

Per the 2018 data provided by VHI, there are 1,315 licensed inpatient beds in PD 21, of which 94 are intensive care unit beds and 825 are medical/surgical 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 WRMC's, and the area's, capacity to treat patients, thereby jeopardizing the quality of care for residents of PD 21. WRMC's proposal increases its bed capacity by 24%, and is a 3% increase in bed capacity in the planning district.

7. Other alternatives to adding bed capacity:

As discussed, given that WRMC has already provided assurances that it has suspended all elective procedures, as well as the difficulty in anticipating how many cases of COVID-19 may arise in PD 21, the addition of beds in an existing medical care facility space represents the best option.

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

The Virginia Department of Health reports that Virginia currently has 11,594 cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and 410 deaths.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 828,441 cases in the United States, with 46,379 deaths.² The Peninsula Health District currently reports 320 cases of COVID-19 positive patients, with another 131 patients in the surrounding jurisdictions.

Findings and Conclusions

WRMC requests authorization to temporarily add 35 beds, including 14 ICU beds and 21 medical/surgical beds. The requested beds will be distributed throughout WRMC, in spaces that are currently being utilized for patient care. WRMC has demonstrated that the rapid rise in COVID-

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

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 21, and limit the ability of health care providers to adequately treat and limit the spread of the virus.

Staff Recommendations

The Division of Certificate of Public Need recommends the **approval** of Sentara Healthcare's request to temporarily add 35 beds at Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center. This staff recommendation is based on the following findings.

1. Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center has demonstrated that, due to the reasonable expectation of a sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care patients resulting from COVID-19 infection, Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center has an immediate need to temporarily add 35 licensed inpatient beds.
2. Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center's plan for training and shifting ambulatory staff is a reasonable solution for staffing the additional beds.
3. Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center's plan and ability to obtain equipment and supplies is reasonable within the confines of the current crisis.
4. Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center's plan to expand bed capacity in existing hospital space throughout the campus assures patient safety is maintained from a fire and life safety code perspective.