

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**Office of Licensure and Certification**  
**Staff Analysis**

April 9, 2020

**Winchester Medical Center (3/31/2020)**

Winchester, Virginia

Temporarily add 50 Beds at Winchester Medical Center

**Hospital**

Winchester Medical Center (WMC) is a Virginia nonstock 501(c)(3) corporation organized in 1984. WMC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Valley Health System. There are two subsidiaries wholly or partially owned by WMC -- The Winchester Medical Center Foundation and Northern WV Home Health, LLC. WMC is located in Winchester, Virginia, which is located in Planning District (PD) 7 within Health Planning Region (HPR) I.

**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, WMC operates an inventory of 465 beds. WMC 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**

WMC 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, WMC requests authorization to temporarily add 50 ICU beds. The requested beds will be located in the Surgi-Center of Winchester, which operates as a department of WMC, and is physically attached to the hospital. Patient care areas within the Surgi-Center, including pre-operative, post-anesthesia care, and operating rooms, will be converted to inpatient rooms to accommodate the 50-bed addition. The resulting bed configuration at WMC is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: WMC Requested Temporary Bed Inventory**

<b>Bed Type</b>	<b>Existing Beds</b>	<b>Requested Additional Beds</b>	<b>Resulting Available Beds</b>
Adult ICU	48	50	98
Medical Rehabilitation	30	0	30
Med/Surg	288	0	288
Obstetric	37	0	37
Pediatric	16	0	16
Psychiatric Bed - Other Adult	36	0	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>515</b>

### **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:**

WMC 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 with exceptions and as provided below.

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

WMC has made assurances that it has the necessary professional staff to provide care in the additional beds. WMC contends that they have significantly reduced operating room cases, elective ambulatory procedures, and clinic services to preserve personal protective equipment and meet the social distancing safeguards required to best contain the spread of COVID-19. As a result, WMC is planning to re-deploy a significant number of ambulatory and perioperative services employees to support the requested additional beds to meet surge capacity and patient demands.

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

WMC has made assurances that it has sufficient access to available medical supplies and personal protection equipment in the facility. WMC contends that they have significantly reduced operating room cases, elective ambulatory procedures, and clinic services to preserve personal protective equipment and meet the social distancing safeguards required to best contain the spread of COVID-19. 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:**

WMC requests authorization to temporarily add 50 ICU beds. The requested beds will be located in the Surgi-Center of Winchester, which operates as a department of WMC, and is physically attached to the hospital. Patient care areas within the Surgi-Center, including pre-operative, post-anesthesia care, and operating rooms, will be converted to inpatient rooms to accommodate the 50-bed addition. WMC plans to consolidate all COVID-19 patients from the 6 hospitals within the Valley Health system to their facility.

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

The requested beds will be located in the Surgi-Center of Winchester, which operates as a department of WMC, and is physically attached to the hospital. Patient care areas within the Surgi-Center, including pre-operative, post-anesthesia care, and operating rooms, will be converted to inpatient rooms to accommodate the 50-bed addition. The Surgi-Center of Winchester space is a department of WMC. Therefore, the space meets 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 Virginia Health Information (VHI), there are 573 inpatient beds in PD 7, including 36 psychiatric care beds, 30 inpatient rehabilitation beds and 56 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 WMC's and the area's capacity to treat patients, thereby jeopardizing the quality of care for residents of PD 7. WMC's proposal increases their bed capacity by 11% and is an 9% increase in bed capacity in the planning district. More importantly, because WMC proposes that the added beds be available to intensive care patients, the request represents a potential 89% increase in available intensive care beds in PD 7, from 56 to 106 ICU beds.

**7. Other alternatives to adding bed capacity:**

As discussed, given that the applicant has already provided assurances that they have suspended all of elective procedures, and the high bed occupancy rate, as well as the difficulty in anticipating how many cases of COVID-19 may arise in PD 7, the addition of beds in space that is already a department of the hospital represents the best option. WMC 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.<sup>1</sup> To date, the Centers for

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

Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 395,011 cases in the United States, with 12,754 deaths.<sup>2</sup> Lord Fairfax Health District currently has 102 cases.

### **DCOPN Findings and Conclusions**

WMC requests authorization to temporarily add 50 ICU beds. The requested beds will be located in the Surgi-Center of Winchester, which operates as a department of WMC, and is physically attached to the hospital. Patient care areas within the Surgi-Center, including pre-operative, post-anesthesia care, and operating rooms, will be converted to inpatient rooms to accommodate the 50-bed addition. WMC plans to consolidate all COVID-19 patients to their facility. DCOPN finds that, due to the sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care cases resulting from COVID-19 infection throughout the Commonwealth, that WMC has an immediate need to temporarily add 50 beds. WMC 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 7, 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 Winchester Medical Center's request to temporarily add 50 beds at the Surgi-Center of Winchester. DCOPN's recommendation is based on the following findings.

1. WMC has demonstrated that, due to the reasonable expectation of a sudden and overwhelming increase in acute care patients resulting from COVID-19 infection, Surgi-Center of Winchester has an immediate need to temporarily add 50 licensed inpatient beds.
2. WMC's plan for training and shifting ambulatory staff is a reasonable solution for staffing the additional beds.
3. WMC's plan and ability to obtain equipment and supplies is reasonable within the confines of the current crisis.
4. WMC'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.

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<sup>2</sup> [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](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)