

# VERMONT LEGAL AID, INC.

## OFFICE OF THE HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

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SPRINGFIELD

May 19, 2020

Kevin Mullin, Chair  
Green Mountain Care Board  
144 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

To Chair Mullin and Members of the Green Mountain Care Board:

Thank you for soliciting comments on the draft FY21 Hospital Budget Guidance, which has been updated to account for COVID-19. The Office of the Health Care Advocate (HCA) submits the following comment as well as an updated set of questions (attached) to be included with the budget guidance. We have limited our questions in accordance with the Board's decision to implement an abbreviated hospital budget review process for FY2021.

The HCA requests that the Board amend the following component of the budget guidance as follows (addition underlined):

Please include information on the COVID-19 relief funds received from [the] state or federal government, including the amount(s) received, how the hospital has or plans to use the funding, and any requirements related to the funding that the hospital must follow (e.g., a prohibition on balance billing uninsured patients).

Please feel free to contact us at [hcapolicystaff@vtlegalaid.org](mailto:hcapolicystaff@vtlegalaid.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Julia Shaw  
Health Care Policy Analyst

Kaili Kuiper  
Staff Attorney

Eric Schultheis  
Staff Attorney

Mike Fisher  
Chief Health Care Advocate

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Health Care Advocate FY2021 Hospital Budget Guidance Questions [Updated due to COVID-19]

### 1. Commercial Rate

In the table provided below, please provide by commercial payer (BCBSVT, TVHP, MVP, Cigna, and Other):

- a. The rate change you implemented in FY2020 and budgeted for FY2021.
- b. The budgeted FY2021 net patient revenue (NPR) and proposed NPR change from FY2020.
- c. The average ratio of the payer's reimbursement rate to Medicare's reimbursement rate.

Table 1. Commercial Rate						
	Rate Change		Net Patient Revenue			Medicare Reference
	FY2020 (Implemented)	FY2021 (Budget)	FY2020 (Budget)	FY2021 (Budget)	% Change from FY20B to FY21B	Average Ratio of Reimbursement Rate to Medicare Reimbursement Rate (FY2020)
BCBSVT						
TVHP						
MVP						
Cigna						
Other						

### 2. Hospital Financial Assistance during COVID-19

- a. How have you changed your official or unofficial patient financial assistance policies and/or procedures during COVID-19?
- b. How have you handled patient collections during COVID-19?
  - i. How many patients had bills sent to collection agencies during each of the first three quarters of FY2020?
  - ii. How many patients currently have bills in collections? How does this number compare to a normal year for your hospital?

### 3. Provider Recruitment

- a. How (if at all) have you leveraged the federal J-1 visa waiver program in your recruitment of health care providers?