

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

July 15, 2021

Mr. Thomas Dee, President and CEO
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
100 Hospital Drive
Bennington, VT 05201**RE: Docket No. GMCB-013-21con, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Proposal to Extend Existing General Surgery Service to Include Bariatric Surgery Services.**

Dear Mr. Dee:

Thank you for your letter dated July 13, 2021, requesting a jurisdictional determination to extend general surgery services to include bariatric services at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center.

In your letter you have stated that SVMC's team of six surgeons will be reduced by 1.25 full time equivalents (FTE) through attrition over the next six months. An experienced general surgeon with significant training and background in bariatric surgery and management of bariatric programs has expressed an interest in joining SVMC's surgery team. The new surgeon would join the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Putnam physician group along with the current general surgeons and would conduct both general and bariatric surgeries and would share clinical call coverage and participate in call rotations. Your letter also states that obesity and obesity related illnesses were identified as priorities in SVMC's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment and that currently patients in SVMC's service area must travel to the University of Vermont Medical Center for bariatric services. You further represent that the initial estimates suggest that SVMC will exceed the minimal annual volume standards of 50 bariatric surgeries annually to maintain quality.

The letter also represents that no new equipment or operating tables will be required as SVMC's existing operating room and imaging department tables and equipment currently accommodate bariatric patients. It is stated that providers for wrap-around services such as nutrition and life-style coaching related to bariatric services would be provided by existing staff and that annual operating expenses associated with adding bariatric services will be less than \$1,000,000.

As described in the letter you have submitted, the project is not subject to certificate of need (CON) review under 18 V.S.A. § 9434(b)(3) at this time. As you proceed with developing and implementing this project, if there are any changes in type, scope or cost of the project, please contact the Board immediately so we may determine whether any further process is necessary.



Failure to do so as required by Green Mountain Care Board Rule 4.301(4) may result in sanctions as specified in 8 V.S.A. § 9445.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 802-760-8162.

Sincerely,

s/ Donna Jerry

Donna Jerry, Senior Health Policy Analyst
Green Mountain Care Board

cc: Michael Barber, GMCB General Counsel