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**DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY**

April 21, 2023

Mr. Shawn Tester, CEO  
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital  
1315 Hospital Drive  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

**RE: Docket No. GMCB-005-23con, Renovation/Construction/Expansion of Emergency Department and Laboratory, Project Cost: \$14,464,831**

Dear Mr. Tester:

Thank you for your application received on April 3, 2023, regarding the above-referenced project. Please respond to the questions below.

**Financial**

1. Explain in detail the impact of the project on Days' Cash on Hand including the current (specify date) Days' Cash on Hand and the impact of the project on projected Days' Cash on Hand in 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027, if any.
2. Provide a more detailed explanation of the methodology used for projecting charge increases.
3. Identify the components included in the \$600,000 in "Other Operating Expense Savings" and the dollar amount associated with each.
4. Complete and resubmit the Payer Revenue Report, Tables B and C to include FY 2026.
5. Provide a hard copy of Tables A, B and C (Income Statement) and Tables 4 A, B and C (Balance Sheet).
6. Explain in detail whether the additional rate increase of .25% to .5% that may be required to fund the higher operating costs due to the project, in addition to the standard annual rate increase NVRH may request (noted on page 30 of the application), is reflected in the financial tables submitted with the application and the reasons for inclusion or exclusion of both the standard annual rate increase and the additional .25% to .5% rate increase.



7. Explain in detail NVRH's contingency plan if the \$2,700,000 fundraising goal for the project is not met.

### **Utilization**

8. NVRH is currently developing a four-bed mental health support area adjacent to the ED which was not subject to CON review. With the addition of this support area which contains four (4) beds to be completed and operational by fall 2023, explain in detail the impact, if any, on the need to increase the number of exam rooms in the ED from nine (9) to 13.
9. On page 16 of the application, NVRH states that avoidable ED visits, as a percentage of total ED visits, has declined from 14.5% in 2020 to 9.3% in FY 2022. In a table format, please provide for each year 2020-2023 the actual number of ED visits, the actual number of avoidable ED visits, and reasons for avoidable visits.
10. Provide a summary of the type(s) of cases you are seeing in the ED and the average number of patient hours each type of case typically requires.
11. Based on Table 7, "Utilization Projections", NVRH projects ED utilization to increase by between 1% and 0.5% annually through 2027. Explain in detail the reasons for the projected growth and the impact on these projections of NVRH's stated success in recruiting the appropriate number of PCP providers to meet community needs, the educational PCP campaign, and the opening of two Express Care Walk-In Clinics.
12. On page 25 of the application, NVRH states, "Additionally, the volumes seen by the two Express Care locations have remained relative to ED volumes, rather than pulling volumes away from the ED." Explain this statement in more detail and the reasons for this being the case.
13. Identify the locations for Northern Express Care at Corner Medical and Northern Express Care (St. Johnsbury), the days and hours of operation for each, and the annual visit volumes for each location for years for 2020, 2021, and 2022.

### **Staffing**

14. On page 13 of the application the increase in staffing is stated to be 1.5 FTE Environmental Support Services technicians and 1.5 FTE ED nurses, or a total of 3.0 new FTEs. However, Table 8B, "Staffing Report", reflects 2.5 additional FTEs due to the project. Confirm which FTE increase is correct, confirm the dollar amount associated with the correct additional FTEs, and confirm that this dollar amount is reflected in the financial tables submitted with the application.



In responding, restate the question in bold font and respond in unbolded font. Send an electronic copy to me at [donna.jerry@vermont.gov](mailto:donna.jerry@vermont.gov) and one hard copy (three-hole punched) with a Verification Under Oath to my attention at the Green Mountain Care Board, 144 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602.

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

Sincerely,

s/ Donna Jerry

Senior Health Policy Analyst  
Green Mountain Care Board

cc. Laura Beliveau, Staff Attorney, GMCB

