

## **HSF QUESTIONS FOR HOSPITALS**



# HOSPITAL 7: NORTH COUNTRY HOSPITAL (NCH)

## **Follow-Up Questions and Requests Related to Your Budget Submission**

### On labor expenses

1. Why do you expect LOCUM expenses to decrease by such a significant margin next year?

### On utilization

2. How were you able to increase patient access in primary care clinics without additional staff? What lessons would you pass onto other hospitals?

### On cost inflation

3. Why do you predict pharmaceutical inflation will be 5%?
4. Why do you predict insurance inflation will be 13.5%?

### On workforce development

5. What is the cost-benefit of these programs, particularly the preceptor? Do you find these programs help attract labor to the area?

### On investments in mental health, SUD, LTC, and primary care

6. Could you speak a little more to the current state and investments in long term care, considering the population age in your county?

### On network efficiencies

7. Do you have any collaborations already in place with NVRH? If so, please detail such collaborations.
8. To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate of when you hope to implement your joint network ventures with NVRH.

### On your income statement

9. Can you provide more context how you've been able to increasingly utilize FPPs for revenues? What lessons would you pass onto other hospitals.
10. We commend you on reducing expenses year over year. How did you achieve the reduction?

### On your workbook submission

11. Table 7 in the workbook (Clinical Productivity) still appears to be missing. This information is required for any hospitals submitting budget requests that do not meet the Section I benchmark for commercial price growth. May you please provide it?
12. In Table 8 of the workbook, it appears many nurses have left but few vacancies remain. Have you cut back on the number of nursing staff and if so, where? If so, has this negatively affected patient experience?

13. Please review the rate decomposition details you submitted as well as the “summary” tab and explain the following (where available, show supporting calculations):
  - a. How did you arrive at the assumed rates of growth for price, volume, and payer mix shifts by payer?
  - b. For non-zero values in the “other” column, how did you derive these estimates?

Other

14. Do you think Medicaid is underfunding the cost of delivering care to your Medicaid patients? If so, please quantify this amount based on 2023 actuals. Please explain your calculation.
15. Do you think Medicare is underfunding the cost of delivering care to your Medicare patients? If so, please quantify this amount based on 2023 actuals. Please explain your calculation.
16. In the attached spreadsheet, please review the measures of financial health that we have calculated for your hospital. We have included the measure definitions. Confirm that these calculated values reflect your understanding. If your financial measures differ from our calculations, please review our formulas, provide your calculation, and explain why you believe your calculation is a better measure for your organization.

**Narrative Questions That Still Need to Be Answered**

Question C.e (administrative vs. clinical expense): Using the Medicare Cost Report definition of administrative clinical, and mixed expenses in Wang & Bai (2023), also defined in the Uniform Reporting Manual, please comment on the relative trends in each of these expense categories over time.