



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF HEALTH CARE ACCESS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

CRISTINE A. VOGEL
COMMISSIONER

August 9, 2004

Dennis McConville
Vice President, Strategic and Operational Planning
Manchester Memorial Hospital
71 Haynes Street
Manchester, CT 06040

RE: CON Application, Docket Number 04-30350-DTR
Rockville General Hospital
Temporary Reduction in Scope of Orthopedic Services

Dear Mr. McConville:

On August 2, 2004, the Office of Health Care Access ("OHCA") received your letter requesting a Certificate of Need determination to temporarily reduce the scope of orthopedic services provided at Rockville General Hospital due to insufficient physician coverage. OHCA has reviewed the information contained in your letter and makes the following findings:

1. Rockville General Hospital ("RGH") provides both inpatient and outpatient orthopedic services in Vernon.
2. RGH currently has an insufficient number of physicians to provide coverage of the Emergency Department for orthopedic services.
3. Without orthopedic call coverage, RGH cannot provide inpatient orthopedic services. It cannot accept orthopedic emergencies or treat inpatients with orthopedic conditions without orthopedic surgeons to respond to orthopedic emergencies and treat the inpatients.
4. RGH is proposing a temporary reduction in the scope of orthopedic services offered at RGH. Outpatient orthopedic surgeries will still take place at RGH during the normal operating hours of the ambulatory surgery services.

5. Many of the patients arriving at the RGH Emergency Department with orthopedic conditions can be treated and managed by ED physicians then be referred to an orthopedic physician for follow-up care. The remainder of the patients who present to the RGH ED will be stabilized and transferred to Manchester Memorial Hospital for orthopedic care. Patients with isolated orthopedic conditions will be diverted to MMH. Scheduled inpatient orthopedic surgery will be performed at MMH, where there are a sufficient number of orthopedic surgeons to provide on-call orthopedic coverage.
6. RGH will continue to actively recruit new orthopedic surgeons. This will strengthen the call coverage schedule in order to provide uninterrupted orthopedic services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
7. RGH states that the reduction is temporary until such time as a sufficient number of orthopedic surgeons are recruited for the Emergency Department.
8. Section 19a-638, C.G.S. states "Each health care facility or institution or state health care facility which intends to terminate a health service offered by such facility or institution or decrease substantially its total bed capacity, shall submit to the office, prior to the proposed date of such termination or decrease, a request to undertake such termination or decrease."

Rockville General Hospital's proposal to temporarily reduce the scope of inpatient orthopedic services provided at RGH does not represent a termination of a function or service, pursuant to Section 19a-638 of the Connecticut General Statutes ("C.G.S."). The temporary reduction of inpatient orthopedic services is due to an insufficient number of physicians in the emergency department. However, once additional orthopedic surgeons are recruited, RGH proposes to reinstitute the inpatient orthopedic service at RGH. Therefore, a CON is not required for RGH to proceed with the proposed temporary reduction in inpatient orthopedic services at the hospital. However, RGH must report quarterly to OHCA on its recruitment efforts starting on November 9, 2004. Please be advised that if the reduction in services continues beyond August 9, 2005 or becomes permanent, then RGH may be required to submit a Certificate of Need Application to OHCA for a termination of service.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Susan Cole at 418-7001.

Sincerely,

Signed by Cristine Vogel
Commissioner

CV:km