

Mr. Michael Constantino  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

**RE: Additional Information for Project #20-017**

Dear Mr. Constantino:

Thank you for your email regarding Project #20-017. I appreciate your review and am pleased to see that there has not been any opposition to the project nor was there a request for public hearing. In response to your specific inquiries, please see the attached tables containing the requested information.

MESC has a track record of providing excellent service at a fraction of the cost of local hospitals to the indigent population. Because we're not a tax-exempt entity, we do not track uncompensated care in our books and records nor as a line item in our financial statements. However, I would estimate one of every 10 patients that we accept has no means to pay, but we accept them anyway out of moral obligation. Based on the historical scope of our procedures performed, we'd estimate that our center constitutes 60% of uncompensated care and Medicaid in the area. Years back the Board placed its confidence in our facility to help the indigent and to fulfill a niche service the local hospitals were unwilling to provide, and we came through on our promise. We perform charity care. We perform free services for patients who can't afford these surgeries elsewhere. Though MESC is small, we are the largest single provider of care to Medicaid in South Illinois, and we will continue to do that for years to come.

With the pandemic and the related economic crisis, everything has changed since February when the other CON expansion request was approved. Everything. The pandemic will at best last for 12 to 18 months and, at worst, for years. Hospitals are prioritizing their care for COVID patients but beginning May 11<sup>th</sup>, providers in non-COVID zones can now provide non-urgent but essential care. A surgery center is one of the best clinical solutions to the crisis. Moving elective surgeries to an outpatient setting is something that should have been done years ago on a large scale basis. It was the right thing to do in the past. It is a necessity now. We would like to play a small but meaningful part for our community to support the availability of quality, cost-efficient care during these times and going forward. In fact, we have already begun performing orthopedic surgeries at our center under our temporary authorization during the pandemic. This CON permit would simply allow us to continue caring for these patients for years to come.

By adding Orthopedic Surgery to our center, we will help ensure that Illinois residents can get the care they need in Illinois rather than having to travel to Missouri for the care they require. Some of the Illinois communities on the Missouri border near St. Louis more generally have developed tremendously in the past 20 years. Shiloh has doubled in size and O'Fallon has increased by nearly one-third in population. With a significant population base, health care resources should be developed locally so we don't have to send patients across state lines. Owing to multiple reasons including infections, patient apprehension and overflow issues, patients need care that only a well-equipped and well-placed surgery center away from COVID-19 care can provide.

Please feel free to contact Kara Friedman or me as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shakeel Ahmed', written in a cursive style.

Shakeel Ahmed, M.D.

**Attachment**

TABLE ONE		
Calendar Year	2019	
	Number of	
Surgical Specialty	Cases	Hours
General Surgery	6	4.25
Gastroenterology	3,645	1,336.5
Obstetrics/Gynecology	0	0
Ophthalmology	0	0
Pain Management	0	0
Plastic Surgery	10	9
Podiatric Surgery	0	0

TABLE TWO		
	Dollars	Number of Patients
Medicaid	\$196,125	718
Medicare	\$386,205	1,183
Other Public	\$119,345	229
Insurance	\$1,316,938	1,501
Private Pay	\$20,900	30
Charity Care	\$0	0
Total	\$2,039,513	3,661

TABLE THREE			
Name of Physician	Specialty	Cases	Hours
Shakeel Ahmed	Gastroenterology	3,645	1,336.5
Howard Lederer	General Surgery	3	2.25
Kurt Sprunger	General Surgery	3	2.25
Stanley Librach	Plastic Surgery	10	9