

Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

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June 20, 2011

Mr. Francis Ose-Afriyie, MA, MBA
Delaware Health Resources Board
Jesse Cooper Building
417 Federal Street
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mr. Osei-Afriyie:

I write on behalf of the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) to strongly endorse HealthSouth's application to construct the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Delmarva in Middletown, DE which will serve persons with disabilities, including persons with traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and stroke.

DDC supports such an initiative based on the following rationale:

- According to the attached Delaware Health Statistics Center report, TBIs are the type of injury most likely to cause death or permanent disability. Nationwide, approximately 1.4 million TBIs occur each year, resulting in 235,000 hospitalizations and 50,000 deaths. Those TBIs requiring hospitalization are generally more severe and carry higher risks of serious and long-term complications. To assess the impact of TBIs in Delaware, inpatient hospital discharge data from the state's acute-care hospitals were analyzed. From 2003 to 2007, there were 4,847 TBI-related hospital stays of Delaware residents, resulting in a five-year-age adjusted rate of 113 discharges per 100,000 populations and a total hospital bill of \$120.9 million. Nearly all of these patients were admitted through the emergency department (ED), and they spent an average of 7 days in the hospital, for a medial bill of \$11,252 per stay.
- Acute and long-term services for persons with TBIs are extremely lacking in Delaware as there is truly only one facility in the entire state that has the capability to manage the care of individuals post-injury. There are no such facilities in the primary area of the proposed HealthSouth facility and most families must send their loved-ones out of state to obtain appropriate care for those who have sustained a TBI.
- The HealthSouth proposal will have a state of the art facility with access to rehabilitation physicians (including neuropsychologists), rehabilitation nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language therapists; case managers and post-discharge services.
- HealthSouth is eager to collaborate with community-based advocacy organizations such as SCPD Brain Injury Committee and the Brain Injury Association of Delaware.
- HealthSouth's initial plan is to obtain joint commission accreditations with specialty certification in stroke and brain injury. It is willing to see CARF accreditation consistent with some of the hospitals (e.g. Salisbury MD) if this is important to the community.

HealthSouth's current position regarding outpatient services is that it wants to collaborate with the existing



network providers, but understands it may need to a further assessment of outpatient services and develop some specific programs to meet the needs. DDC respects HealthSouth's perspective, but does have a concern about initiating the inpatient unit without outpatient therapy being offered at the same facility. Outpatient therapy, specifically regarding cognitive deficits in the TBI population, is a vital part of any inpatient discharge plan and represents the real continuum of care. Council's concern is that such capacity does not exist within the current service providers in that area, and indeed, there is a shortage statewide in this context.

However, DDC does support the aforementioned application and is looking forward to collaborating with HealthSouth to improve the lives of individuals with brain injuries and their families. A successful application will result in a facility which will allow people with TBIs and their families to have more flexibility and choice about their health care and access to supports and services; reduce the need to send people out of state for care; and increase capacity for such critically needed services in Delaware.

Please see attached letter of support from the State Council for Persons with Disabilities along with supporting documentation.

Sincerely,



Harline Dennison
Developmental Disabilities Council

