



Alan Levine
Chairman,
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October 28, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP
Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Health
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: Update on Plan to Reinstitute Inpatient Services at Unicoi County Hospital

Dear Commissioner Piercey:

This is an update to Ballad Health's ("Ballad's") submission on October 16, 2020 regarding our plan for reinstatement of inpatient services at Unicoi County Hospital. Ballad originally requested, and the Tennessee Department of Health (the "Department") approved, a waiver of Section 4.03(a)(ii) of the Terms of Certification to allow the temporary suspension of inpatient services at Hancock County Hospital, Unicoi County Hospital and Hawkins County Memorial Hospital due to COVID-19. This temporary suspension allowed Ballad to redeploy the health system's staff and resources to meet the needs of the region during the outbreak. Given the persistence of the COVID pandemic, Ballad requested an extension of this waiver, which the state granted through October 31, 2020. The Department asked Ballad to provide our plan to reinstate inpatient services at Hancock County Hospital, Unicoi County Hospital and Hawkins County Memorial Hospital, including any plan of communication, at least 14 days prior to the termination of the extension. Per the Department's request, our plans to reinstate inpatient services at Hancock County Hospital, Unicoi County Hospital, and Hawkins County Memorial Hospital were provided on October 16, 2020.

Unicoi County Hospital began accepting inpatients ahead of the scheduled November 1st reopening date for inpatient admissions. As of yesterday, there were seven inpatients at Unicoi County Hospital. Unfortunately, since the reopening of inpatient services at Unicoi County Hospital, COVID-19 hospitalizations across Ballad's service area have increased at an alarming rate. Given the number of COVID-19 inpatients we are projecting in the coming weeks, we are requesting approval to extend the temporary suspension of inpatient services at Unicoi County Hospital so that we may redeploy the Unicoi County Hospital nurses and staff to help with the spike in admissions. We will look to restore inpatient services as soon as possible but are facing many unknowns at this time. Ballad would immediately suspend inpatient admissions at Unicoi County Hospital upon your approval and gradually transition any existing inpatients out of the hospital through the normal discharge process.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and thank you for your support as we work together to fight this pandemic. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan M. Levine".

Alan Levine

cc: Herbert H. Slatery III
Tennessee Attorney General and Reporter

Janet M. Kleinfelter
Tennessee Deputy Attorney General

Judi Knecht, Interim COPA Director
Tennessee Department of Health

Jeff Ockerman
Tennessee Department of Health

The Honorable Norman Oliver, MD, MA, State Health Commissioner
Virginia Department of Health

Erik Bodin, Director, Office of Licensure and Certification
Virginia Department of Health

Allyson Tysinger
Virginia Senior Assistant Attorney General

Larry Fitzgerald
Tennessee COPA Monitor

Kevin Meyer, COPA Analyst
Virginia Department of Health

Dennis Barry
Southwest Virginia Health Authority

Tim Belisle, EVP & General Counsel
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Karen Guske, SVP COPA Compliance Officer
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