

 **LIFEBRIDGE HEALTH.**  
**CARE BRAVELY**

2401 W. Belvedere Avenue • Baltimore, MD • 21215

VIA EMAIL

November 20, 2020

Ben Steffen  
Executive Director  
Maryland Health Care Commission  
4160 Patterson Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

Kevin McDonald  
Chief, Certificate of Need Division  
Center for Health Care Facilities Planning & Development  
Maryland Health Care Commission  
4160 Patterson Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21215

RE: Emergency Certificate of Need Application  
LifeBridge Health, Inc.: Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, Inc.

Dear Mr. Steffen and Mr. McDonald:

Pursuant to COMAR 10.24.10.20, we write to the Maryland Health Care Commission (“**MHCC**”) to obtain an Emergency Certificate of Need (“**ECON**”) for a project at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, Inc. (“**Sinai Hospital**”) that will expand Sinai Hospital and LifeBridge Health, Inc.’s (“**LifeBridge**”) capacity to accommodate the current surge in hospital admissions and urgent need for additional hospital inpatient beds related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address the national state of emergency declared by the President and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency declared by Governor Hogan in March 2020, LifeBridge is seeking approval to have a 24-bed behavioral health unit on the second floor of the Mt. Pleasant Building located at Sinai Hospital converted to flexible beds to house patients requiring either low-acuity acute care or subacute care (“**Converted Beds**”). Because Sinai Hospital does not currently have subacute beds, we are requesting the ECON to also cover the addition of a health care service (comprehensive care) at Sinai Hospital in this unit.

The existing space was previously approved by MHCC to accommodate the expansion of inpatient behavioral health services at Sinai Hospital to facilitate the transfer of behavioral health patients from Grace Medical Center as part of its long-term plans to convert to a Freestanding Medical Facility. With the recent, rapid increase in patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, Sinai Hospital has seen a significant reduction in its acute care bed capacity (“**Acute Care Beds**”). A number of Acute Care Beds are regularly

occupied by low-acuity acute care patients or patients who cannot be discharged to a skilled nursing facility due to capacity/cohorting issues related to COVID-19 at the skilled nursing facility. If the project is approved, Grace will delay its transfer of behavioral health patients so that Sinai Hospital will be able to better manage patients requiring a higher level of care (such as those with COVID-19) by shifting patients requiring low-acuity acute care or subacute care to the Converted Beds, thereby increasing Sinai Hospital's Acute Care Bed capacity.

Because the space currently features private patient rooms that were built to accommodate behavioral health patients (no medical gases or electric outlets), they will be used only for patients needing low-acuity acute care/subacute care. With that being said, we may need to provide temporary electrical outlets in these rooms and we estimate we will be able to have that completed within one week of commencing the project and estimate the cost of that project to be approximately \$40,000.

As outlined in Mr. Steffen's memo dated March 17, 2020, this project will undoubtedly help address both the state's urgent need for additional inpatient beds and provide a swift, timely response to the extraordinary harm COVID-19 continues to pose to our patients and employees.

As the second surge of this unprecedented, catastrophic pandemic continues to rapidly effect the health and safety of our patients, staff, providers and every person throughout the state and country, we respectfully request you act upon this request for an ECON as soon as possible. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We thank you for your consideration and expeditious response.

Sincerely,



Daniel Blum  
President and COO of Sinai Hospital and Senior Vice President of LifeBridge Health, Inc.

Cc: via email

Neil Meltzer, President, LifeBridge Health, Inc.  
Robert Neall, Secretary of Health  
Katie Wunderlich, Executive Director, Maryland Health services Cost Review Commission  
Paul Parker, Director, MHCC, Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development  
Ruby Potter, Health Facilities Coordination Officer, MHCC  
Suellen Wideman, Esq., Senior Assistant Attorney General, MHCC