



Essentia Health

November 4, 2021

Stefan Gildemeister
Division of Health Policy
Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64882
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0882

Sent electronically to Stegan.gilfemeister@state.mn.us

Dear Mr. Gildemeister:

It has come to our attention that Regions Hospital in Saint Paul, Minnesota, is seeking to add 45 licensed beds, including 5 inpatient mental health beds and 36 additional licensed medical-surgical beds by the spring of 2024. Essentia Health is submitting this letter in support of Regions Hospital's proposal.

Due to the current shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds, patients often are forced to wait many days for an available inpatient bed to open somewhere in Minnesota or its neighboring states. These patients are frequently transported across the state, far away from their families and support systems, which adversely impact patients with psychiatric symptoms. Essentia Health believes by increasing the number of beds in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area will help decrease this problem not only in the Twin Cities, but throughout greater Minnesota as well.

Minnesota continues to face a substantial shortage of the array of mental health services needed to provide adequate services for patients through the state. This shortage has been and continues to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that there is a strong need for the additional beds proposed by Regions Hospital and that these beds will help to address the shortage of services for patients requiring inpatient care. Essentia Health believes that the quality of care provided by Regions Hospital is excellent and that this facility is well-positioned to provide adequate staffing models and overall complete inpatient services in a way that will meet the needs of the additional patients they will be serving in the additional beds requested.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments regarding Regions Hospital's proposal for additional beds. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jon Pryor, MD, MBA
President
Essentia Health - East

Bradley Beard, MHA, FACHE
Chief Operating Officer
Essentia Health - East