

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 17, 2015

TO: Trent Sansing

FROM: Michael D. Warren, MD, MPH, FAAP, Assistant Commissioner
Director, Family Health and Wellness
Chair, Perinatal Advisory Committee 

SUBJECT: Certificate of Need Application CN 1510-047, TriStar Horizon Medical Center

The certificate of need application from TriStar Horizon Medical Center, Dickson, has been reviewed by members of the Perinatal Advisory Committee (PAC). The application was sent in electronic format to all members of the Committee.

TriStar Horizon Medical Center is requesting approval to establish a six-bed neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and provide Level II neonatal intensive care services at their facility. The proposed project will not add any additional beds to the facility.

The review by the PAC members generated a number of concerns, including:

1. There is an overall concern that the number of births (about 1000) is not sufficient to maintain the level of quality and expertise needed in the NICU staff. Literature supports that small volume NICU units cannot maintain the level of skills and expertise required for safe care of these infants.
2. Neonatologist coverage is described as being on-call and not on-site in the unit. He/she may be 1.5 hours away from the hospital when needed. Details are needed to describe the expansion of their current coverage with NNP for 24/7/365 coverage with the NNPs.
3. The application does not describe the level of obstetrical care available for the mothers who also may be high risk. There is a concern that once the NICU opens the hospital will have more deliveries with the potential for more mothers needing emergency OB care. ACOG recommends planning for OB care whenever NICU services are established.
4. One-third of referrals currently to Level II NICU are for hypoglycemia; this seems very high and seems out of line. There is a need for more details on these referrals, especially information on how preterm these infants were.
5. The agreement with Vanderbilt EMS for transport is dated 2000; it should be updated. Vanderbilt LifeFlight is available to provide air transport; however, it is air ambulance only and would not include the necessary expert staff needed for transporting critical infants.
6. A major reason for setting up the NICU is stated as reducing the drive time for parents to Nashville. Members were concerned that this reason should not be the major factor considered. There are well staffed and equipped NICUs that can provide comprehensive care in a 60-75 minute drive from the service area. There was concern expressed that it may not be feasible or economical to open a NICU to reduce drive time 20-40 minutes.

If additional information is needed, please let us know.