

Good afternoon. I'm Bridget Orth, Director of Regulatory Planning for Northwestern Medicine. We are excited to be moving forward with our proposed expansion project at Lake Forest Hospital. Since opening the replacement facility in March 2018, Lake Forest Hospital has been experiencing extremely high med/surg and ICU occupancy levels. Projections for inpatient days that were included in that CON application were exceeded by almost 20%. The proposed addition of beds, emergency department stations, and diagnostic imaging equipment will allow Lake Forest Hospital to return to target occupancy and utilization levels.

The proposed project will improve access to care across the Lake Forest Hospital service area. Access to comprehensive, quality healthcare services is important for the achievement of optimal health and improving quality of life. It impacts overall physical, social and mental health status, including prevention of disease and disability, detection and treatment of health conditions, preventable death, and life expectancy.

Additional beds will allow us to continue our dedication to improve the health of the most medically underserved members of the community. Since the replacement hospital opened, the number of patient days from under-resourced communities has increased at a higher rate than the overall increase in patient days at Lake Forest Hospital. In 2020, Lake Forest Hospital provided more charity care than any other Lake County hospital by a wide margin; Lake Forest Hospital's charity care as a percentage of net patient revenue was double that of any other Lake County hospital. Additionally, the rate of increase in inpatient Medicaid volume at Lake Forest Hospital is the highest of all hospitals in the county.

We do not take this financial investment lightly. But as highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, investment in additional bed capacity is needed more than ever. If our project is approved by the Health Facilities and Services Review Board in May, the beds will be ready for use by 2027. We look forward to our review by the Health Facilities and Services Review Board on May 9th. Thank you.