

Alisha Simon  
Health Economics Program  
Minnesota Department of Health  
P.O. Box 64882  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882

Dear Ms. Simon,

My name is Steve Stanfield and I am an emergency physician at Regions Hospital. I am writing in support of Regions Hospital's request for 100 additional inpatient bed licenses. I have had the honor of practicing as an emergency physician for the past twenty years. I joined Regions Hospital five years ago. What attracted me to Regions Hospital was the focus on providing the highest quality of care regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

Since joining Regions Hospital I have seen that commitment continue and am proud to be part of the Quality Department at Regions. I also serve as the Medical Director of Access and Flow. In the latter role, I am intimately familiar with the challenges of a growing hospital and an expanding patient volume. Since becoming Medical Director of Access and Flow, myself and my team have taken on the task of optimizing our inpatient capacity and have used multiple strategies to try and achieve this aim. The work in this area has made Regions Hospital one of the highest capacity hospitals in the country in terms of percent occupancy. Most urban hospitals of similar size operate at a capacity of around 64% occupancy.

In addition to efficiency of bed utilization, Regions Hospital has continued its commitment to quality and patient safety. Multiple studies show that higher census levels correlate with higher numbers of adverse safety events. This past year, we beat this national trend. Regions actually had a decline in safety events despite very high capacity. This is a monumental achievement and underscores our commitment to providing the highest quality care for our community.

However, as we continue to experience increasing demand, we are not able to accommodate additional requests for admission. Frequently, we are turning away admission requests from hospitals right here in Saint Paul. Regions Hospital provides specialty services for our community that are not available at other area hospitals. Our request for additional bed licenses is not a request for "what is best for Regions Hospital" but rather "what is best for our community".

Please help us continue our commitment to providing much needed services for our community. We have been outstanding stewards in terms of cost of care, in terms of bed utilization and in terms of providing the highest quality of care. In addition, we provide more charity care than any other hospital in Saint Paul. A vote for more bed licenses is a vote for our community.

Sincerely,

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Greetings,

Who I am

ED physician

Medical Director of Access and Flow

Challenge of the legislature is to control the moratorium. There has been quite a bit of discussion that granting an expansion of this moratorium would benefit regions hospital alone. I would submit that the beneficiary of this expansion would be the citizens of St. Paul. As medical director of access and flow, I have been in the unique position of watching and planning for the rapid expansion of patient volumes at Regions hospital. In this role, I have helped to spearhead many efforts to keep regions running at an extremely high occupancy. Most hospitals in the US operate at roughly a 65-67% occupancy rate while Regions has worked exhaustively to increase our ability to care for patient in a limited setting. We currently have a daily occupancy rate of 92-94% on any given day and even higher for our mental health hospital.

We have developed surge protocols that include boarding admitted patients in hallways and post operative recovery areas, worked with other hospitals in the area to dis tribute mental health patients to all facilities when we all face full occupancy. We are currently at 100% of our bed licenses and as of this morning we had a 98 % occupancy rate. We have no extra capacity to surge. We do not have the ability to care for that next trauma patient that one of the other st paul hospitals would like to divert to us. We are the only level one trauma center in st paul and as such, must be able to stay one step ahead of potential traumatic events. Our ability to respond to a mass casualty event has been significantly limited by our occupancy constraints.

Regions' mission is to serve the health care needs of our community now and far into the future.