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Miller says beds address critical need

By Sandy Gibbs
The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE — To address what Nicholas County Hospital administrator Dan Miller called a critical need for more bed space, NCH has applied for a \$1.25 million expansion.

The expansion would provide 35 new nursing home beds, adding 35-40 new members to the NCH staff. This would have an immediate economic impact on Nicholas County, Miller said.

Miller pointed out that NCH is already the counties second largest employer. "Demonstrated need in this district exceeds 300 beds and we have a waiting list of 286 people right now, so I would say that the need is critical," Miller said.

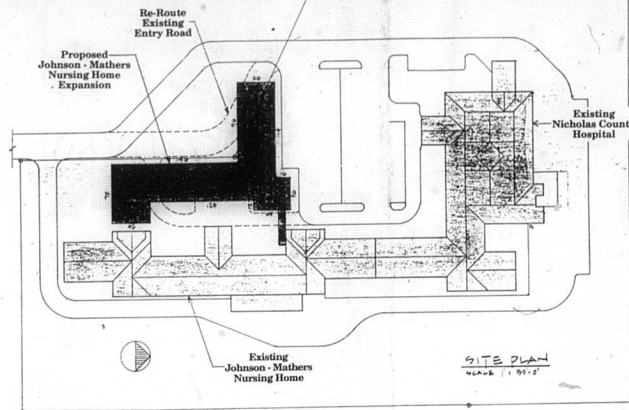
"What's really sad is when you get a couple who've been together 50 years and one will get sick and need to go to a nursing home. Because of the limited bed space they might have to go as far as 100 miles to get the care they need. And this happens quite often."

There are hurdles to be overcome. First of all, The Commission for Health Economics Control in Kentucky received applications for 4,845 new beds. Current plans call for adding only 949 in the next two years.

In addition, the approval process is lengthy and complicated, Miller said, gesturing toward a bulging file. A public hearing should be scheduled some time between January and March. The Commission will then make a decision as to where the new beds will be located.

There is some cause for optimism. Out of some 100 letters the Hospital has received concerning the addition Miller said that not one has been negative.

"We had an extremely positive response," Miller said. "Every letter expressed support."



For additional nursing home beds . . .

State agency bombed with requests

By The Associated Press
FRANKFORT — The Commission for Health Economics Control has been swamped with requests for new nursing home beds, including a request from Johnson-Mathers Health Care in the wake of a General Assembly decision to expand Medicaid funding for that care. The legislature authorized money equal to the annual cost of Medicaid reimburse-

ment for 675 additional beds. Because about 71 percent of all new long-term care beds are certified for Medicaid, it is estimated that as many as 949 beds, not including personal care beds, may be approved in the next two years. The commission, which is charged by law with reviewing and approving expansions in such publicly funded medical programs, has received 100 applications for

4,845 new or converted nursing home beds. The three-member panel will begin public hearings on the applications on Jan. 14. The commission's decisions are expected by March 20. Under the terms of the state health plan, the commission is to award the new certificates based on the following criteria:

- ✓ take licensed beds out of counties where there are more than needed according to the state plan and add that number to counties where the plan indicates there is a shortage.
- ✓ award licenses in counties where there are no long-term care beds of the level sought.
- ✓ award licenses in a county with fewer beds than the plan indicates or in which both the proposed county site and every adjacent Kentucky county are

- under the maximum level in the plan.
- ✓ award licenses for beds needed in both the county of the applicant and statewide.

There has been a general restriction on the growth of Medicaid-funded nursing home beds in Kentucky under a moratorium imposed several years ago. The moratorium was not an outright ban, but beds were approved on a case-by-case basis.

Winter Warning And A Mixed Bag

Nicholas County and most of Kentucky experienced nearly every type of weather, Thursday.

From early morning snow flakes to somewhere between one and two inches on the ground, followed by a covering of ice and heavy sleet, back to snow and finally rain it spanned the spectrum.

There was a slow-down in traffic, however with little local travel, with factories and schools closed there was only a minimum of accidents.

The Carlisle Mercury/
Beth A. Bond Photo

