



**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER, 5TH FLOOR  
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

**LISA PIERCEY, MD, MBA, FAAP**  
COMMISSIONER

**BILL LEE**  
GOVERNOR

December 21, 2020

Mr. Alan Levine  
Executive Chairman, President  
and Chief Executive Officer  
Ballad Health  
400 North State of Franklin Road  
Johnson City, TN 37604

Re: Temporary Suspension of Inpatient Services at Unicoi County Hospital

Dear Mr. Levine:

On December 9, 2020, I received your letter requesting a further extension of 120 days of the temporary suspension of Section 4.03(a)(ii) of the TOC to allow Ballad Health to continue the temporary suspension of inpatient services at Unicoi Hospital.

With the difficult persistence of COVID-19 cases in Ballad's service area as well as the rise in COVID-19 hospitalizations, I understand that Ballad is facing a continued strain on system resources and is therefore requesting an extension of the suspension of inpatient services at Unicoi County Hospital.

In reviewing the request, I agree that this temporary suspension would be helpful to Ballad in addressing the larger community's health care needs at this critical time. Therefore, I approve a 60-day extension of the suspension of admissions at this facility, which is consistent with the timeframe that the State must adhere to in extending the State of Emergency throughout the pandemic.

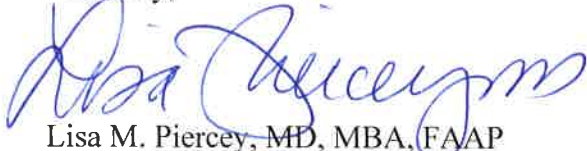
As with the Department's prior temporary extension approvals, Ballad should submit a plan for the reinstatement of inpatient services at Unicoi County Hospital including any plan of communication at least 14 days prior to termination of the m60-day extension period.

I would also like to reiterate that this temporary suspension does not in any way affect or otherwise constitute a waiver of Ballad's obligations and commitments under the TOC, including but not limited to Ballad's aggregate spending commitments outlined in the TOC.

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our communities, and in particular health care providers and the delivery of health services, we remain grateful for Ballad's efforts to care for COVID-19 patients while ensuring continued access to all patients in the entire service area.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP  
Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Health

**cc:**

Tim Belisle  
EVP & General Counsel, Ballad Health

Karen Guske  
SVP Ballad Health, COPA Compliance Officer

The Honorable Norman Oliver  
State Health Commissioner  
Virginia Department of Health

Erik Bodin, Director, Officer of Licensure and Certification  
Virginia Department of Health

Allyson Tysinger  
Virginia Senior Assistant Attorney General

Dennis Barry  
Southwest Virginia Health Authority

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COPA Analyst, Virginia Department of Health

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Janet M. Kleinfelter, Deputy Attorney General  
State of Tennessee

Judi Knecht, Interim COPA Director  
Tennessee Department of Health

Jeff Ockerman  
Tennessee Department of Health

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