**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 44‑7‑170 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED REVIEW, TO EXEMPT A CHANGE IN THE EXISTING BED COMPLEMENT OF A GENERAL HOSPITAL THROUGH THE ADDITION OF ONE OR MORE BEDS TO BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, OR CHANGE IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF LICENSURE OF ONE OR MORE GENERAL HOSPITAL BEDS TO BEDS TO BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 44‑7‑170(A) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) The following are exempt from Certificate of Need review:

(1) the acquisition by a person of medical equipment to be used solely for research, the offering of an institutional health service by a person solely for research, or the obligation of a capital expenditure by a person to be made solely for research if it does not:

(a) affect the charges imposed by the person for the provision of medical or other patient care services other than the services that are included in the research;

(b) change the bed capacity of a health care facility; or

(c) substantially change the medical or other patient care services provided by the person.

A written description of the proposed research project must be submitted to the department in order for the department to determine if these conditions are met. A Certificate of Need is required in order to continue use of the equipment or service after the equipment or service is no longer being used solely for research;

(2) the offices of a licensed private practitioner whether for individual or group practice except as provided for in Section 44‑7‑160(1) and (6);

(3) the replacement of like equipment for which a Certificate of Need has been issued which does not constitute a material change in service or a new service;

(4) a change in the existing bed complement of a general hospital through the addition of one or more beds to be used exclusively for mental health services, or change in the classification of licensure of one or more general hospital beds to beds to be used exclusively for mental health services, provided that the hospital proposing the change in existing bed complement or classification provides documentation to the department, in the form of an affidavit from the hospital’s chief executive director or administrator, that the hospital had a minimum of one hundred hours per month of holding patients in need of admission for psychiatric services in its emergency department for any three months within the preceding twelve month period.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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