

North Carolina State Medical Facilities Plan: Operating Room Work Group Summary

On December 17, 2024, the Operating Room (OR) Work Group convened to discuss the implications of recent statutory changes under Session Law 2023-7 on North Carolina's ambulatory surgical facilities (ASFs). The meeting focused on interpreting the statute's language, particularly regarding its application to existing and new ASFs in 16 counties with populations over 125,000.

Key points of discussion included:

- The ambiguity surrounding whether the statute applies solely to existing facilities or includes new entrants.
- The statutory requirement for qualified urban ASFs to dedicate at least 4% of their revenue to charity care and Medicaid cases.
- Concerns about the potential proliferation of ASFs under the new law and the need for mechanisms to track new facilities and their impact on the State Medical Facilities Plan (SMFP).
- Suggestions for updating the OR need methodology to account for both surpluses and deficits, particularly in counties affected by ASF adjustments.
- Comparisons to regulations in other states, such as Georgia and South Carolina, for managing ASF growth.

The group emphasized the importance of data collection, interagency collaboration, and stakeholder feedback. Attendees were tasked with reviewing the full presentation and providing detailed questions and suggestions for the next meeting on January 11, 2025. Public input will be sought during the comment period for the 2026 SMFP, beginning March 5, 2025.