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1 / 1 A computer-generated rendering of what the 72-bed SBH facility would look like.



## Proposed Kingsport hospital gets state approval

HANK HAYES • JUN 23, 2016 AT 5:30 PM

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**KINGSPORT** — Memphis-based Strategic Behavioral Health (SBH) announced on Thursday that it has received final approval from the Tennessee Health Services and Development Agency (HSDA) to build a 72-bed hospital facility off of Stone Drive in Kingsport.

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□ The new hospital will provide psychiatric care for adults, adolescents and seniors, as well as substance abuse treatment for adults. Its service area will include Sullivan and Hawkins counties in Tennessee, along with three counties in Southwest Virginia – Wise, Scott and Lee.

□ “We are extremely pleased by the decision to allow a new hospital in Kingsport,” SBH Founder and President Jim Shaheen said in a prepared release. □ “Without a doubt, the facility will have a tremendous impact on the local community, which has struggled with limited treatment options for citizens with psychiatric or substance abuse issues. SBH looks forward to collaborating with health systems and providers throughout the region to better identify and serve these patients, helping to reduce the burden on area emergency rooms and ensure a better standard of care.”

Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA) opposed the CON and indicated the planned SBH facility would undermine its behavioral facility, Woodridge Hospital, based in Johnson City.

SBH initially filed a Certificate of Need (CON) application with HSDA in 2013. However, HSDA’s vote on the application resulted in a tie, leading to an appeals process. Earlier this year, an administrative law judge on the case issued an order to approve SBH’s CON application. HSDA held its final hearing on the CON this week, and on Wednesday, voted in support of approving the application.

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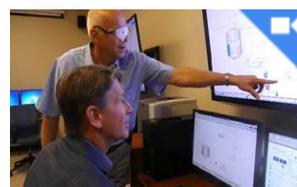
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“The Health Services and Development Agency decided to adopt the (administrative law judge’s) initial order as its final order by a 5-4 vote,” HSDA General Counsel Jim Christoffersen said in an email. “MSHA may appeal the decision to the Davidson County Chancery Court, and from there, to the Tennessee Court of Appeals.”

In an emailed statement, MSHA said its position has not changed.

“We believe the facility proposed by SBH would cause harm to the region’s safety net behavioral health provider, Woodridge Hospital, making it more difficult for people who are uninsured or underinsured to access the care they need,” the MSHA statement stressed. “Mountain States recognizes the need for safety net access as well as community-based services that can help reduce the need for inpatient hospitalization. Our ability to continue providing those services would be severely impacted by the proposed SBH facility, resulting in a negative impact on the region. We are currently reviewing our options and are prepared to exercise all the rights afforded in law to ensure the proper consideration of the impact to Woodridge and the subsequent impact on access for the poor and those who most need the services.”

Last February, Shaheen said SBH did a national study and determined Kingsport didn’t have enough beds for psychiatric services.

Kingsport-based Wellmont Health System, which hopes to merge with MSHA, sided with MSHA.

Plans call for the facility to be located at the end of Executive Park Boulevard off of East Stone Drive.

In a previous release, SBH said the \$12 million project would create between 180 and 220 jobs with an average hourly wage of between \$18 and \$22 per hour, plus a full benefits package.

The company also said other advantages of the project include decreasing costs for law enforcement in transporting mental health patients, and money saved for consumers, because there will be fewer emergency room visits.

For additional information about SBH, visit <http://www.strategicbh.com>.

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