



Health Resources and Services Administration

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

for

Alteration/Repair/Renovation of Existing Medical Center Facilities (Nationwide)

Background

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides discretionary grant and cooperative agreement awards to support health centers expand their capacity to provide primary and preventive health care services to medically underserved populations nationwide. HRSA's programs provide funds for existing Health Center Program grantees under the Health Center Cluster Program New Access Points, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and Facility Investment Program initiatives to address pressing capital improvement needs in health centers, such as construction, repair, renovation, and equipment purchases, including health information technology systems.

Finding

HRSA prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate one category of actions to be funded through HRSA grants, encompassing the renovation and rehabilitation of buildings and facilities to support improved services in the Nation's health centers to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for actions falling under the Programmatic EA. This Programmatic EA is incorporated by reference into this FONSI.

With the Programmatic EA in place, the environmental review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its associated environmental laws will be streamlined, allowing grantees to submit an Environmental Information and Documentation Form (EID) as part of their application process. This project level environmental review will ensure there are no extraordinary circumstances that exist that are beyond the issues identified and evaluated within this document. All grant applications will be reviewed to determine if they fall within the scope of this Programmatic EA. If extraordinary circumstances are identified in the EID, a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required for that action.

Extraordinary circumstances encompass the following:

- a. Unique situations presented by specific proposals, such as scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal;

- b. Uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks;
- c. Unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources within the meaning of Section 102(2)(E) of NEPA; or
- d. Where it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.

Three alternatives were analyzed in the Programmatic EA: alteration/repair/renovation of interior portions of buildings, the alteration/renovation/repair of exterior portions of buildings, and the No Action Alternative. There is no threshold on the square foot size of buildings being renovated since the existing footprint will not be changed in any of these actions. Instead, each action must be evaluated to ensure that it falls under the level of impact discussed within this document. These actions may apply to any existing facility, including current medical centers or buildings whose use is being changed to that of a medical center through renovations. Any changes in zoning must be evaluated to ensure no inconsistencies or conflicts with current zoning or land-use requirements. Greater impacts than normally anticipated for an action would create the need for additional evaluation through a site-specific EA to determine level of significance of that impact.

HRSA has determined that the alternatives assessed in the Programmatic EA would not have significant individual or cumulative adverse effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. With appropriate mitigation measures as described below, no significant adverse impacts would occur to geology and soils; air quality; water quality; floodplains; wetlands; biological resources; cultural resources; traffic; solid or hazardous materials and waste; noise; or land use. No significant adverse cumulative impacts would occur.

Mitigation Summary

Potential Impact	
Impacts to Water Quality	Follow all state, local, and tribal regulations regarding runoff, erosion, and construction management (BMPs) employ Low Impact Development design, focus on landscape solutions
Impacts to Air Quality	Follow all state, local, and tribal regulations regarding construction and operational emissions. Low VOC materials and energy efficient design.
Increased Noise Generation	Maintain normal daylight hours for construction. Noise restrictions are generally more stringent at night and on weekends. Comply with state, local, and tribal noise regulations.
Impact on Surrounding Land Uses	Ensure compliance with local land use, zoning and comprehensive plans, as well as related permit processes and ordinances
Traffic Delays and Congestion During Construction and Operation	Utilize flaggers on busy roads during construction. Carefully stage equipment and construction worker's cars during construction.
Impacts to Solid and Hazardous Materials and Wastes	If hazardous materials are present or likely, ensure appropriate studies are undertaken to identify location, type, and extent of hazard. Based on results of studies, ensure hazardous materials are dealt with in accordance with federal, state, and local requirements.
Impacts to Soil	Follow all state, local, and tribal regulations related to soil conservation and runoff (such as implementation of BMPS to reduce erosion during construction).

Impacts to Vegetation and Wildlife	Most medical centers are located in developed areas, so impacts to critical habitat are unlikely. Impacts to any undisturbed natural areas are to be avoided.
Impacts to Wetlands	Avoid any disturbance to wetlands or waters of the U.S.
Impact on Historic Qualities or setting of site and/or adjacent site	Ensure compliance with Section 106 requirements for any buildings greater than 50 years old, or buildings less than 50 years old where significant events may have taken place i.e. first successful heart transplant or a former President was treated here, etc.). Identify potential for below ground cultural resources prior to ground disturbing activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the Programmatic EA and adherence to the project conditions set forth in the Programmatic EA, and in accordance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (44 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) and the HHS General Administration Manual Part 30 Environmental Protection (February 25, 2000), HRSA has determined that the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared and projects which fall under the Programmatic EA may proceed.

Approvals:

_____/s/_____
Ann E. Piesen August 31, 2009
Date
Acting Environmental Officer
Division of Grants Policy
Office of Federal Assistance Management

_____/s/_____
Michael J. Nelson September 2, 2009
Date
Deputy Associate Administrator
Office of Federal Assistance Management