



Health and Human Services

2025 Iowa Certificate of Need (CON) Application

Instructions: 1. Complete all the sections below. 2. Provide concise, evidence-based responses, with supporting documentation or data as needed. 3. Reference Iowa Code 10A.714, as needed, to complete the application. 4. Upload additional documentation, as needed.

Primary Contact

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Facility Name

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center

Facility Address

1221 South Gear Avenue, West Burlington, Iowa 52655

Project Title

daVinci Robot Acquisition

1. Applicant and Facility Overview

a. Project Purpose and Objectives:

The surgical robotics program aligns with the State's SHIP plan, although not explicitly. The addition of this service will help improve access to care by bringing advanced, minimally invasive surgery capability to southeast Iowa, where no program currently exists. This eliminates access barriers for rural patients who must currently travel to other regions for these services. These improvements align with the State plan's goal to ensure equitable access to care, even if surgical care itself isn't an explicit focus of the plan (Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

This program will serve the full spectrum of our patient population across our multi-county service area. The initiative will accommodate groups who face disproportionate barriers to care. By bringing robotic-assisted surgery to our region, we reduce the care burden experienced by our most vulnerable patients and help ensure they receive timely, high-quality treatment close to home. This initiative is part of our broader commitment to health equity, patient-centered care, and the expansion of services that meet our community's evolving needs.

b. Relationship to Long-Range Development Plan:

The proposed initiative directly aligns with all pillars of Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center's strategic plan.

People: The program helps attract and retain high-caliber surgeons by providing access to advanced technology and training opportunities. This strengthens our reputation as a modern, desirable place to work and reduces workforce turnover.

Quality: Robotic-assisted surgery improves surgical precision and outcomes. This supports Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center’s goal to deliver high-quality, equitable, and safe care.

Customer: By offering surgical robotics locally, the need for patients to travel for advanced care technologies is reduced. This improves access and enhances the overall patient experience by providing modern, minimally invasive options close to the region.

Stewardship: A well-utilized robotics program supports long-term financial performance by increasing surgical volume, retaining patients within our system, and reducing outmigration to outside health systems.

c. Description of Proposed Service/Program:

A surgical robotics program is the proposed health service being pursued at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center’s West Burlington campus. The technology is offered by Intuitive Surgical Systems. Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center must pursue a surgical robotics program to remain competitive in its surgical offerings. It is Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center’s intent to utilize this technology for a number of surgical specialties.

d. Target Population: Specify geographic and demographic areas.

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center is a non-profit organization and sole community hospital that serves patients from southeast Iowa, western Illinois, and northeast Missouri. The medical center’s service area is comprised of a region characterized by rural geography and an aging population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024).

e. Relation to Existing Provider Network: Summarize relationship with other health care providers/services in the region.

We collaborate closely with local and regional providers to ensure continuity of care. When required, we also facilitate transfers and referrals to larger centers for specialty care not offered locally. The planned surgical robotics program is designed to enhance, not duplicate, regional services. We are working to offer minimally invasive surgical techniques locally, so patients no longer need to travel long distances to receive the high-quality care they deserve.

f. Funding Sources and Financial Resources: Identify and document sources of funding and financial viability.

This initiative was approved as part of the FY26 capital budget. Adequate capital exists to purchase, implement, and maintain this program sustainably. An attached analysis and proforma provides a more detailed analysis of expected cost and reimbursement. The break-even point is projected to occur before the end of the equipment’s expected useful life.

Current # of Beds (if changing)

Current bed type (if changing)

Requested # of Beds (if changing)

Requested bed type (if changing)

Document Upload

Certificate of Need - Bed Utilization Stats - July 2025.xlsx

2. Community Need and Service Gaps

a. Description of Need:

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center serves a multi-county region that includes rural and underserved populations. The West Burlington campus serves patients from Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa counties, Northeast Missouri, and Western Illinois representing a total population size of over 100,000 residents. Over 20% of the population is aged 65 or older compared to the statewide average of 18% (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2024). Rural residents experience higher rates of chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. These conditions increase the likelihood that surgical intervention is required (Coughlin, et al., 2020).

Currently, no surgical robotics programs are located within 70 miles of West Burlington. Patients must travel to Iowa City, Peoria, or the Quad Cities for robotic procedures. This can result in delayed care, higher out-of-pocket costs due to travel, and reduced access to minimally invasive techniques associated with faster recovery.

b. Assessment of Existing Services and Gaps:

The proposed surgical robotics program at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center directly addresses an unmet need for advanced surgical care in southeast Iowa, a region characterized by rural geography and an aging population. Patients requiring minimally invasive robot-assisted procedures must travel over 70 miles to other health systems. This creates issues related to travel, cost, time, and continuity of care. By adding this program, Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center will significantly improve accessibility to state-of-the-art surgical interventions for underserved populations, including older adults and low-income residents who face disproportionate challenges in accessing care (Coughlin, et al., 2020).

Robot-assisted surgery offers well-documented benefits, such as reduced complication rates and readmissions rates (Stauss, et al., 2022). These outcomes are particularly important for patients with the chronic conditions prevalent in the region.

The addition of this program will also enhance the health system's ability to recruit and retain skilled surgical providers. Access to advanced technology is a critical factor influencing where surgeons and specialists choose to practice. Surgeons increasingly expect robotic capabilities as part of their clinical practice, considering it essential to provide cutting edge care and maintaining professional development (American College of Surgeons, 2023). Investing in this technology signals Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center's commitment to clinical excellence and innovation and will provide a foundation for improved clinical outcomes.

c. Alternatives Analysis:

Referrals to outside facilities for robot-assisted surgical interventions will continue to prove challenging for residents within Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center's immediate service area. This model places significant burden on elderly, underinsured, and transportation limited patients. Referral-based care contributes to delayed access, fragmented care, and higher financial strain on patients and families. It also results in lost volumes for the health system, which weakens the long-term sustainability of local health care infrastructure.

Another alternative would be to continue with only conventional laparoscopic and open surgery. These methods remain viable in many cases, but robotic surgery has demonstrated lower complication rates and readmission rates, along with faster recovery times and shorter hospital stays (Stauss, et al., 2022).

d. Accessibility Considerations:

A primary consideration when evaluating the addition of a surgical robotics program was to eliminate geographic barriers for patients within Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center's service area. Currently, no surgical robotics programs are located within 70 miles of West Burlington. Patients must travel to Iowa City, Peoria, or the Quad Cities for robotic procedures. This can result in delayed care, higher out-of-pocket costs due to travel, and reduced access to minimally invasive techniques associated with faster recovery. The addition of a surgical robotics program eliminates or reduces these constraints.

e. Community Input/Support:

While no formal community meetings or surveys have been conducted to date, we are committed to engaging our stakeholders throughout the process. We anticipate strong support of this program based on

our organization's history of expanding access to advanced care and our ongoing efforts to meet the surgical needs of the rural population we serve.

Document Upload (if needed)

f. Non-discriminatory Access:

The surgical robotics program will be offered without discrimination to all patients regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, or socioeconomic background. All patients will have equitable access to robotic-assisted procedures based on medical necessity and provider recommendation in alignment with the organization's policies and applicable state and federal regulations. The program will be designed to serve the entire regional population and will be seamlessly integrated into existing surgical offerings.

3. Impact on Existing Providers

a. Impact Assessment:

No providers offer similar services within a 70-mile radius of Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center. Considering this, there is unlikely to be a significant impact on operations at outside facilities.

b. Community and Economic Impact: Broader system effect and value-added to the community.

The addition of this program will prevent the outmigration of patients to outside facilities that offer surgical robotics services. Providing these services locally ensures that revenue is retained within the region. Local access will help reduce costs for patients by reducing travel. The addition of robotic capability will also allow for the recruitment of high-performing surgeons (American College of Surgeons, 2023).

By adding this program, Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center will significantly improve accessibility to state-of-the-art surgical technology for underserved populations, including older adults and low-income residents who face disproportionate challenges in accessing care (Coughlin, et al., 2020).

c. Efficiency in Use of Resources: Shared/cooperative arrangements to maximize efficiency.

We intend to operate the surgical robotics program as a shared resource within our surgical services suite, accessible to multiple specialties. This will ensure adequate volumes and maximized utilization of the surgical robotics program. This interdisciplinary model supports efficient scheduling, shared staffing, and cross-trained surgical teams.

4. Financial and Operational Feasibility

a. Financial Projections and Feasibility:

This project was approved as part of the FY26 capital budget. Adequate capital exists to support the purchase and ongoing maintenance of this technology. The program's focus will initially be on general surgery, with an eventual expansion to obstetrics, urology, and ENT. The initial purchase amount will be approximately \$2,875,000. Ongoing annual expenses associated with the program will be approximately \$265,000. The investment is expected to breakeven at approximately 5.3 years, which is before the equipment's estimated useful life.

Detailed estimations of revenue, expense, and break-even projections are outlined in the attached proforma.

Document Upload (3-year budget projections)

da Vinci Pro Forma.pptx

b. Staffing and Operations:

The surgical robotics program will be integrated into our existing surgical service line and will operate much like our conventional and laparoscopic surgical offerings. No additional staff or management will be

required for the implementation of this initiative. The current operating room staff will manage robotic-assisted procedures within their existing roles and scope of practice. Robotic surgeries will be scheduled, staffed, and coordinated through our established processes for surgical case management. Training and credentialing will be provided to relevant personnel to ensure safe and effective use of the robotic system. Surgeons will undergo manufacturer-approved training and follow internal privileging guidelines.

The primary resource requirement will be the acquisition of the robotic system and necessary instruments. No major changes to staffing, workflows, facilities, or departmental oversight are anticipated. Our operating rooms are adequately equipped to accommodate robotic-assisted procedures with minor modification.

c. Short and Long-term Viability:

This program will be supported by existing staff and the supplementation of additional labor will not be required. Maintenance of the current workforce will ensure this program is supported. This project was approved as part of the FY26 capital budget. Adequate capital and financial resources exist to support the procurement and maintenance of this technology.

5. Community and Economic Impact

a. Community Engagement:

Although we have not conducted formal outreach sessions specific to this program, the surgical robotics program was pursued as part of a broader effort to increase local access to high-quality, minimally invasive procedures for the patients we serve. We believe the addition of this program will reduce the need for patients to travel to outside facilities, which disproportionately affects low-income and elderly patients.

b. Resource Availability:

Fortunately, the surgical robotics program will be supported by existing staff and management. The supplementation of additional labor and facilities will not be required to sustainably manage this program.

c. Organizational Relationships:

The surgical robotics program will be fully integrated with our existing ancillary and support services, including imaging, anesthesia, sterile processing, nursing, and postoperative care. These services are already in place to support a broad range of surgical techniques.

At present, there are no formal affiliations with academic medical centers, medical schools, or HMOs. However, we maintain informal relationships with outside providers and may explore future collaborative opportunities. The program is designed to serve as a sustainable and self-contained service line within our health system, with capacity for future growth and potential integration into broader regional care strategies.

6. Project Planning

a. Project Timeline:

The start of this program will be contingent on approval of Certificate of Need, but there is intent to start performing cases in Q42025.

Key Milestones:

August – IT readiness

September – Case observations

October – Equipment delivery and staff training

Q42025 – Perform first cases

b. Innovative Components:

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center will significantly improve accessibility to state-of-the-art surgical interventions for underserved populations, including older adults and low-income residents who face disproportionate challenges in accessing care (Coughlin, et al., 2020).

The implementation of this technology stands to reduce surgical complications, readmissions rates, and length of stay. These improvements are desirable to the patients within our community (Intuitive, 2023).

c. Regulatory Compliance:

We have assigned a compliance coordinator that will be involved in implementation who will be focused on ensuring all regulatory requirements are met and that all is in line with CMS guidelines. All providers will achieve appropriate credentialing prior to using the technology.

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center will leverage existing general surgery quality assurance measures to monitor the effectiveness and safety of the program. Surgical case quality outcomes will be compared to quality outcomes from laparoscopic and conventional open surgery to determine effectiveness. 30-day complication and readmission rates, surgical site infection rates, and accidental puncture rates will all be monitored on an ongoing basis.

7. Special Criteria for Specific Services:

a. Alternative Consideration (10A.714(2)(a)):

Implementing an in-house surgical robotics program is the most practical and patient-centered solution. The proposed addition of this technology allows Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center to modernize its surgical services, meet rising patient needs, and ensure that high-quality care remains accessible within our health system.

b. Utilization of Similar Facilities (10A.714(2)(b)):

Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center is the primary provider of surgical services in the immediate region, and there are currently no local facilities offering robotic-assisted surgery within our rural service area. This project represents an appropriate and efficient expansion of care capabilities in response to an unmet need, rather than a duplication of existing services.

c. Construction/Modernization (10A.714(2)(c)):

The addition of a surgical robotics program demonstrates Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center's commitment to a modernization of care offerings. Robotic-assisted surgery represents a significant advancement in minimally invasive surgical intervention.

We remain open to collaboration with regional providers who would like to refer patients for robotic-assisted procedures, and will continue to explore opportunities that increase access, efficiency, and sustainability.

d. Access Concerns (10A.714(2)(d)):

There are no surgical robotics programs within a 70-mile radius of Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center. Patients in our region will continue to face significant barriers to accessing advanced surgical techniques if we take no action. Additionally, the absence of robotic-assisted capabilities may compromise our ability to recruit and retain high-quality surgeons, placing further strain on access to surgical care in the region over time. Failure to implement this program will exacerbate existing disparities, limit patient choice, and threaten the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of local surgical services.

e. UIHC Special Role (10A.714(3)):

n/a

Signature

Dr. Joel Ryon

Additional Supporting Documents Upload

References.docx