2026 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.

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Facility Name
Ellsworth Municipal Hospital DBA Hansen Family Hospital

Facility Address
920 S Oak St, Iowa Falls, Iowa 50126

Project Title
Implementation of Robotic-Assisted Surgery: Acquisition of the da Vinci Xi Surgical System

Project Type
New Equipment

Would you like to request a summary review?
Yes

1. Applicant and Facility Overview

a. Project Purpose and Objectives:
The purpose of this project is to expand access to advanced surgical services within the local community by delivering high-quality care through trusted providers. This initiative enables patients to receive treatment close to home, supporting recovery in a familiar setting with access to family and social support, while significantly reducing the physical, financial, and logistical burdens associated with long-distance travel. In the current healthcare environment, robotic-assisted minimally invasive surgery is widely recognized as the standard of care. Establishing local access to these services addresses a critical gap in care and advances equitable access to sophisticated surgical treatment for rural populations.

b. Relationship to Long-Range Development Plan:
Implementing minimally invasive surgery at Hansen Family Hospital underscores our commitment to being an innovative leader in rural healthcare. This initiative aligns with our strategic goal to expand surgical capabilities and ensure access to high-quality care close to home. By introducing advanced surgical options, we not only address the immediate needs of our patients but also strengthen our ability to recruit and retain top surgical talent. Equipping surgeons with state-of-the-art instrumentation is essential to

remain competitive and relevant in today's evolving healthcare landscape.

When Hansen Family Hospital was built in 2013, it was designed with a forward-thinking approach to expand access to surgical services and integrate advanced technology. As a result, no additional construction is required to onboard the da Vinci Surgical System, allowing for seamless implementation within our existing infrastructure.

The long-term benefits of this initiative include improved patient outcomes through shorter recovery times and lower complication rates, enhanced community trust in local healthcare services, and sustained growth in surgical volumes. Furthermore, this investment positions Hansen Family Hospital as a destination for advanced care within the region, fostering economic stability and supporting the hospital's financial sustainability for years to come.

c. Description of Proposed Service/Program:
The da Vinci 5 Surgical System represents Intuitive's fifth-generation platform, designed to support surgeons in performing minimally invasive procedures through a console-controlled, patient-side robotic system. This advanced system comprises a surgeon console, patient-side cart, and a system tower with integrated vision infrastructure. It introduces significant platform enhancements, including Force Feedback technology, which enables surgeons to sense push/pull forces and tissue tension during common tasks such as dissection, retraction, and suturing (Intuitive, 2025).

Hansen Family Hospital has established clinical leadership with the requisite expertise to ensure the safe and effective implementation of the da Vinci 5 Surgical System.

d. Target Population: Specify geographic and demographic areas.
Hansen Family Hospital serves a rural population within Hardin County, encompassing approximately 16,405 residents. As a designated critical access hospital, Hansen Family Hospital functions as the primary access point for inpatient, outpatient, emergency, and surgical services within the county. According to census data, approximately 24% of Hardin County residents are aged 65 or older, with 15.7% living independently in this age group (U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 Decennial Census Demographic Profile Data (DP1, P1/P2) - Hardin County, Iowa).

Demographic trends indicate a growing need for advanced surgical services among both older and younger populations. The aging population is expected to increase demand for procedures that minimize recovery time and reduce complications, while younger patients are increasingly seeking minimally invasive approaches due to benefits such as shorter recovery periods, minimal scarring, and faster return to work and daily activities. These trends underscore the importance of expanding access to robotic-assisted surgery to meet evolving patient expectations and healthcare needs.

e. Relation to Existing Provider Network: Summarize relationship with other health care providers/services in the region.
Hansen Family Hospital works closely with local and regional providers to ensure continuity of care for our patients. When specialty services are required that are not available locally, we facilitate transfers and referrals to larger medical centers to ensure patients receive the appropriate level of care. The planned surgical robotics program is designed to complement and enhance existing services rather than duplicate them. Additionally, Hansen Family Hospital is proud to be an affiliate of MercyOne, further strengthening our collaborative network and access to advanced resources in our rural communities.

f. Funding Sources and Financial Resources: Identify and document sources of funding and financial viability.
Hansen Family Hospital is requesting funds through the Best and Brightest – Medical Equipment Procurement Program to support the purchase and installation of the da Vinci 5 Single Console System. The remaining portion of the total project budget will be funded by Hansen Family Hospital utilizing internal

resources. A detailed pro forma analysis outlining projected costs and anticipated reimbursement is included as an attachment for review.

Current # of Beds (if changing) **Current bed type (if changing)**

Requested # of Beds (if changing) **Requested bed type (if changing)**

Document Upload

2. Community Need and Service Gaps

a. Description of Need:
Hansen Family Hospital serves a rural population within Hardin County, which encompasses approximately 16,405 residents. As a designated critical access hospital, Hansen Family Hospital functions as the primary access point for inpatient, outpatient, emergency, and surgical services within the county. Despite this essential role, the hospital currently faces limitations in its ability to provide advanced minimally invasive and robotic-assisted surgical services due to the absence of on-site robotic surgical technology.

As a result, patients requiring robotic-assisted or complex minimally invasive procedures must often travel 50 to 90 miles to access care at regional or urban referral centers. These distances create significant barriers related to transportation, time away from work and family, and continuity of care.

b. Assessment of Existing Services and Gaps:
By acquiring the da Vinci 5 Single Console System, Hansen Family Hospital will expand access to advanced surgical services for residents of Hardin County, significantly reducing the need for patients to travel outside the county for care and supporting continuity of care within the local healthcare system.

The hospital conservatively projects serving approximately 175 patients in the first year of operation, generating an estimated $1.8 million in net income. This projection assumes a 33% market capture within the defined service area, with approximately 18% of eligible cases utilizing the proposed equipment. Under more favorable conditions, annual volume could exceed 500 patients. These projections align with prevailing market trends, as hospitals offering robotic surgical capabilities are now performing 60% or more of their surgical cases robotically.

Expected health benefits, as reported by our partner Intuitive, include:

1–2 days shorter recovery times

35% fewer complications

75% fewer transfusions

30% fewer readmissions

By offering these procedures locally, Hansen Family Hospital will improve access to essential surgical care for residents who currently must travel significant distances to receive similar services.

c. Alternatives Analysis:
Referrals to outside facilities for robotic-assisted surgical interventions will continue to present significant challenges for residents within Hardin County’s immediate service area. Referral-based care often results in delayed access, fragmented care, and increased financial strain on patients and their families. Failure to

expand access to advanced surgical services through technological innovation risks eroding community trust in rural healthcare. As standards of care continue to advance, critical access hospitals play a vital role in driving innovation and eliminating gaps in access to care for the communities we serve.

Continuing to offer only conventional laparoscopic and open surgical procedures remains an option; however, these methods, while viable for many cases, do not provide the same level of benefit as robotic-assisted surgery. Robotic-assisted techniques have demonstrated clear advantages, including lower complication and readmission rates, faster recovery times, and shorter hospital stays. These outcomes underscore the importance of investing in advanced surgical technology to improve patient care, strengthen continuity of services, and ensure rural populations receive the current standard of care locally.

d. Accessibility Considerations:
Patients in Hardin County routinely travel 50 to 90 miles to urban referral centers such as Des Moines, Waterloo, Mason City, Ames, or Rochester to access robotic or advanced laparoscopic procedures. Establishing a robotic surgery program at Hansen Family Hospital would significantly reduce these travel burdens, improving access to advanced surgical care for local residents. This initiative also represents a key service line that supports our mission of delivering exceptional care through compassion, innovation, and the highest standards of quality.

e. Community Input/Support:
Our community members and stakeholders will be actively engaged throughout this process, and we anticipate strong support for the addition of robotic-assisted surgery as we work to improve access to high-quality care in Hardin County.

Document Upload (if needed)

f. Non-discriminatory Access:
Minimally invasive robotic surgery will be offered without discrimination to all patients, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, or socioeconomic background. Patients will have equitable access to care based solely on medical necessity and provider recommendation.

3. Impact on Existing Providers

a. Impact Assessment:
The closest provider offering similar services is located approximately 37 miles from our facility. Given this distance, the impact on existing providers is expected to be minimal.

b. Community and Economic Impact: Broader system effect and value-added to the community.
Providing these services within our community helps retain healthcare revenue locally while creating opportunities to recruit and retain highly skilled staff and surgeons. This initiative also attracts additional professionals committed to advancing rural healthcare through the best talent and technology available. Furthermore, offering advanced surgical care close to home reduces costs for patients by eliminating the financial and logistical burdens associated with long-distance travel.

c. Efficiency in Use of Resources: Shared/cooperative arrangements to maximize efficiency.
The da Vinci 5 Surgical Console System will be utilized across multiple specialties, including general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and urology.

In general surgery, robotic-assisted procedures such as hernia repair, gallbladder removal, rectal surgery, and appendectomy address conditions that commonly affect adults and older residents, many of whom are managing chronic diseases. Providing these procedures locally using minimally invasive robotic techniques can reduce complications, shorten hospital stays, and support better long-term management of chronic conditions by allowing patients to recover closer to home and remain engaged with their local care providers.

The program will also support obstetrics and gynecology procedures, including hysterectomy, myomectomy, and pelvic organ prolapse repair. These interventions address conditions that significantly impact women's health, quality of life, and ability to remain active in family and work roles. Robotic-assisted approaches often allow for smaller incisions, less pain, and faster recovery. Benefits that are especially important for women balancing caregiving responsibilities or facing limited access to extended recovery support in rural settings.

In urology, robotic-assisted procedures such as prostatectomy and bladder surgeries directly support cancer care and chronic disease management. Prostate cancer is a common diagnosis among older adults, and timely surgical treatment can significantly improve long-term outcomes. Providing robotic-assisted urologic surgery within Hardin County enables patients to receive advanced cancer treatment closer to home, improving continuity of care and reducing the emotional and physical burden associated with traveling long distances for repeated appointments and follow-up care.

4. Financial and Operational Feasibility

a. Financial Projections and Feasibility:
Please refer to the attached pro forma for a detailed financial analysis. Hansen Family Hospital has the necessary resources to support both the purchase and ongoing maintenance of this technology, ensuring long-term sustainability and operational success.

Document Upload (3-year budget projections)
Da Vinci Pro Forma 01_16_26.xlsx

b. Staffing and Operations:
Clinical leadership with the requisite expertise is in place to ensure the safe and effective use of the da Vinci 5 system. The hospital's surgical program is anchored by a highly skilled team, including our general surgeon, OBGYN, Urologist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), registered nurses serving in first-assist, PACU, and circulating roles, as well as surgical scrub technologists trained in operating room procedures. This staffing structure ensures adequate coverage for robotic-assisted cases, supports safe patient care, and provides redundancy to mitigate scheduling or staffing disruptions.

c. Short and Long-term Viability:
Hansen Family Hospital has the administrative, clinical, and operational capacity to purchase, implement, and utilize the da Vinci 5 Single Console System. The hospital has established leadership structures, clearly defined roles, and proven processes that support capital procurement, regulatory compliance, and the integration of advanced clinical technology within a rural hospital setting.

5. Community and Economic Impact

a. Community Engagement:
Our community members and stakeholders will be actively engaged throughout this process, and we anticipate strong support for the addition of robotic-assisted surgery as we work to improve access to high-quality care in Hardin County. By reducing the recovery time and travel constraints currently faced by patients and providing access to advanced robotic-assisted surgical services locally, we will enhance patient outcomes and strengthen the overall health and well-being of our community.

b. Resource Availability:
Our existing surgical program is fully equipped to support the integration of the surgical robotics initiative. At this time, no additional staff will be required. As the program develops, we will evaluate and implement enhancements to the staffing structure to ensure continued efficiency and quality of care.

c. Organizational Relationships:
Hansen Family Hospital maintains an affiliation with MercyOne, a partnership that continues to strengthen our ability to deliver high-quality care. Access to advanced surgical equipment across the network enhances lifesaving support when it matters most. In addition, we will maintain informal collaborations with healthcare organizations throughout Iowa to ensure a seamless continuum of care for our patients. This initiative will be fully integrated into our existing service lines, reinforcing our commitment to innovation and excellence in rural healthcare delivery.

6. Project Planning

a. Project Timeline:
Hansen Family Hospital has developed a comprehensive timeline for procurement, installation, operationalization, and reimbursement. Following Certificate of Need approval, we will finalize a purchase agreement with Intuitive for the da Vinci 5 Single Console System, anticipated in April 2026. In May 2026, the hospital will coordinate delivery and installation of the equipment in collaboration with the vendor. This phase will include system delivery, installation, configuration, testing, and completion of any minor equipment-related preparations necessary for operational readiness. Required staff training and credentialing will be completed during this period in accordance with manufacturer standards and hospital policies. The robotic-assisted surgery program is anticipated to launch in June 2026, following completion of installation, testing, and internal operational sign-off.

b. Innovative Components:
Implementing a robotics-assisted surgery program at Hansen Family Hospital introduces a transformative approach to rural healthcare delivery. This initiative leverages advanced technology to overcome geographic and resource limitations commonly faced by critical hospitals. Key innovative elements include; (Intuitive, 2025).

-Tele-mentoring and Remote Practicing: Integration of secure video platforms to enable real-time support from experienced robotic surgeons at larger centers, ensuring safe adoption and continuous skill development.

-Cross- Specialty Utilization: Strategic deployment of the da Vinci 5 system across multiple surgical specialties; general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and urology to maximize utilization and cost-effectiveness.

-Rural Workforce Development: Customized training pathways, including simulation-based learning and credentialing programs, designed specifically for rural surgical teams to maintain high standards of care.

-Data- Drive Quality Monitoring: Implementation of advanced analytics to track outcomes, efficiency, and cost savings, supporting continuous improvement and demonstrating value to stakeholders.

This forward-thinking approach positions Hansen Family Hospital as a regional leader in innovative care, ensuring equitable access to advanced surgical services for rural populations while strengthening the hospital’s long-term sustainability.

c. Regulatory Compliance:
Hansen Family Hospital will ensure full compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations governing the implementation and operation of robotic-assisted surgical technology. Key areas of focus will be;

-FDA and Manufacturer Standards

-Credentialing and Training

-HIPAA and Data Security

-Infection Control

-Quality Assurance

These measures ensure that the implementation of the da Vinci 5 Surgical Console System aligns with all regulatory obligations while maintaining the highest standards of patient safety and operational integrity.

7. Special Criteria for Specific Services:

a. Alternative Consideration (10A.714(2)(a)):
An alternative approach would be to maintain the current laparoscopic and conventional open surgical methods. However, under this strategy, patients would continue to travel significant distances to access advanced surgical care. Implementing this initiative provides our community with the opportunity to receive the current standard of surgical care close to home.

b. Utilization of Similar Facilities (10A.714(2)(b)):
Hansen Family Hospital serves the residents of Hardin County, where patients currently travel a minimum of 37 miles to access robotic-assisted surgery. This initiative will expand the range of services offered locally, deliver the current standard of surgical care, and significantly improve access for our community.

c. Construction/Modernization (10A.714(2)(c)):
Implementing a robotics-assisted surgery program modernizes care at a critical access hospital by introducing advanced technology that aligns with the current standard of surgical practice. Robotic systems enable minimally invasive procedures that reduce recovery times, lower complication rates, and improve patient outcomes. This initiative enhances the hospital's ability to provide high-quality, cutting-edge care locally, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for advanced surgical services. It also strengthens recruitment and retention of skilled providers, supports workforce development through specialized training, and positions the hospital as a leader in innovative rural healthcare delivery.

d. Access Concerns (10A.714(2)(d)):
Without implementing a robotic-assisted surgery program, patients in Hardin County will continue to face significant barriers to care. Currently, individuals must travel 37 to 90 miles to access advanced surgical services, creating challenges related to transportation, time away from work and family, and continuity of care. These barriers disproportionately affect elderly and financially limited patients, often resulting in delayed treatment or foregoing necessary procedures. Maintaining only conventional surgical methods would perpetuate these gaps and prevent the community from receiving the current standard of care locally.

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

Signature

Additional Supporting Documents Upload