

Mr. Chairman and members of the Council, thank you. My name is Brian Looby and I represent the Medical Association of Georgia.

Under Georgia law, a physician-owned, single specialty facility that costs less than the capital threshold does not have to obtain a Certificate of Need prior to opening. However, the Department of Community Health has classified General Surgery as a multi-specialty, forcing General Surgeons that seek to open an ambulatory surgery center through the time consuming and costly CON process.

It is the position of the Medical Association of Georgia that the classification of general surgery as a multi-specialty is erroneous and that general surgery should be recognized for what it is - a single specialty.

Within in the medical community, it is without question that general surgery is a single specialty. In addition to the Medical Association of Georgia, the American Medical Association and the American Board of Medical Specialties recognize general surgery as a single specialty. Furthermore, Georgia is the only state the does not recognize general surgery as a single specialty and the only context in which Georgia does not recognize general surgery as a single specialty is in regards to the exception to the Certificate of Need requirement.

By not recognizing general surgery as a single specialty, the state of Georgia places an unreasonable and unjustifiable burden on general surgeons seeking to open an ambulatory surgery center and limits the ability of patients to obtain cost-effective, quality care.

For these reasons, the Medical Association of Georgia respectfully requests that this Council recognize General Surgery as a single specialty, we ask this council to recommend that the Department of Community Health recognize general surgery as a single specialty and we ask this council to recommend that the State Commission on the Efficacy of the Certificate of Need Program recommend in its final report to the legislature that general surgery be recognized as a single specialty.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.