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**Department of Transformation and Shared Services**  
Governor Asa Hutchinson  
Secretary Amy Fecher  
Director Mitch Rouse

April 7, 2022

Solomon Graves, Secretary  
Arkansas Department of Corrections  
1302 Pike Avenue, Suite C  
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114

Dear Secretary Graves:

The Arkansas Department of Corrections (DOC) is developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a medical services contract to administer and manage DOC's healthcare delivery program. DOC has targeted August 2022 as a release date for the RFP. In December, DOC requested that the total cost be weighted at a lower percentage of the total evaluation score for this RFP. As you noted in your letter in December, Arkansas Code Annotated § 19-11-230(d)(2)(B)(i) allows me to lower the percentage weight given to total cost below the default minimum if it is in the best interest of the State. In RFPs, the default minimum weight given for total cost is established in statute at thirty percent (30%) of the total evaluation score; DOC has requested that total cost be weighted at twenty percent (20%) of the total evaluation score.

The medical services contract for DOC's program is a ten-year contract to manage the delivery of healthcare services for the largest congregated population in Arkansas. Given the size of the system and the nature of the service, it is important that increased emphasis be put on the bidder's ability to provide quality medical care. Moreover, DOC's proposal also puts emphasis on the length of the contract by weighting the annual increase in cost at ten percent (10%) of the total evaluation score, while having total cost be weighted at twenty percent (20%) of the total evaluation score. Thus, DOC is still putting thirty percent (30%) weight on cost; it is just allowing itself the ability to evaluate the increase on cost over the length of the proposed contract.

For these reasons, and those that DOC has highlighted in its letter, I find that it is in the best interest of the State for total cost to be given a weighted value of no less than twenty percent (20%) of the total evaluation score in DOC's upcoming RFP for medical services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mitch Rouse", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Mitch Rouse



## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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December 20, 2021

Mr. Edward Armstrong, Director  
Office of State Procurement  
P.O. Box 2940  
Little Rock, AR. 72203

RE: Request for Weighted Cost Deviation  
Request for Proposal #RFP 2021: C8803  
Medical Services Contract

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

The Arkansas Department of Corrections (DOC) respectfully requests permission to waive the 30% Weight Cost requirement on our Request for Proposal (RFP) for Comprehensive Medical Services, which is currently being written and scheduled to be released August 1, 2022.

A.C.A. § 19-11-230 (d)(2)(A) states in part, "...cost shall be weighted at least thirty percent (30%) of the total evaluation score for a proposal submitted in response to the request for proposals." However, section (d)(2)(B)(i) allows, in certain circumstances, for the State Procurement Director to make an exception if the director makes a written determination that the lower percentage is in the best interest of the state. Please consider this the DOC's formal request for a waiver of the thirty percent (30%) Weighted Cost, to be reduced to twenty percent (20%) upon approval.

A.C.A. §§ 12-29-404 to 12-29-409 sets out requirements for managing healthcare within the State of Arkansas correctional system, specifically that the DOC is responsible for establishing, administering, and managing the healthcare delivery program. We have continually met this statutory obligation by remaining laser-focused on the quality of medical care provided to those in our custody as opposed to focusing solely on the cost.

Our population is the largest in a congregate setting in the State. As we learned during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, providing services to the offender population requires diligence, planning, and an ability to adapt to the evolving needs of such a large system. While we have always been committed to providing quality medical care within the correctional system, the challenges we faced during the COVID-19 pandemic have furthered our determination to focus on quality over cost. Given the size of our system and ultimately the contract award amount to service this population, I, along with the Board of Corrections and Division Directors, feel it is in the best interest of the state to lower the emphasis placed on cost as part of the bid process to ensure the bidder best suited to provide quality medical care is selected.

We continue to evaluate our processes and look for ways to improve the quality of life for those placed in our custody. Lowering the emphasis placed on cost during the RFP selection process will further our goal of implementing best practices across the system for our offender population. Your favorable consideration of this request would be appreciated. If you have questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Solomon Graves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Solomon" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Graves".

Solomon Graves  
Secretary of Corrections

cc: Medical Services RFP Committee