Governor Abbott Takes Action To Expand Texas Hospital Capacity

March 25, 2020 | Austin, Texas | Press Release

Governor Greg Abbott today has temporarily waived certain hospital licensing rules and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has adopted an emergency rule to meet Texas' need for additional hospital capacity while the state responds to COVID-19. These actions allow for certain facilities that have pending licenses or facilities that have been closed for no more than 36 months to come online under existing hospital building licenses. These facilities will be administered and operated by hospitals with existing licenses. The waivers also remove certain mileage restrictions which will allow hospitals to operate additional facilities that are more than 30 miles away from the main licensed hospital.

"One of our top objectives is to ensure that COVID-19 patients in Texas who need a hospital bed will have access to a bed," said Governor Abbott. "There are healthcare facilities across the state that have either recently closed or have yet to receive a license, but are otherwise ideal locations to aid in our COVID-19 response. By waiving these rules, we can quickly bring many of these facilities online to help Texas communities maximize their hospital capacity and provide care to Texans in need."

Additionally, Governor Abbott has directed HHSC to waive certain regulatory requirements regarding facility license renewals. These waivers will allow general, special, and psychiatric hospitals, free-standing emergency medical facilities, and end-stage renal facilities to renew their license without submitting a fire marshal's report. The facilities will still be required to update their records at a later date.

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