



December 21, 2020

As the State of Texas continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the state's hospital regions—known as Trauma Service Areas—have the hospital capacity to serve the needs of Texans. On September 17, Governor Abbott issued [Executive Order GA-31](#) to continue important protections for hospital capacity.

In pertinent part, Executive Order GA-31 provides as follows:

Every hospital that is licensed under Chapter 241 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and is also located in an area with high hospitalizations as defined below, shall postpone all surgeries and procedures that are not medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who without timely performance of the surgery or procedure would be at risk for serious adverse medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's physician; provided, however, that this prohibition shall not apply to any surgery or procedure that, if performed in accordance with the commonly accepted standard of clinical practice, would not deplete any hospital capacity needed to cope with the COVID-19 disaster.

The Department of State Health Services reports that, for the past seven days, the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients in Trauma Service Area G has exceeded 15% of total hospital capacity, making it an area with high hospitalizations as defined by Governor Abbott's October 8, 2020, [Proclamation](#) amending Executive Order GA-31. Based on this information, as of December 21, 2020, all licensed hospitals located in Trauma Service Area G are required to postpone elective surgeries as set forth in Executive Order GA-31. Trauma Service Area G includes the following counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Franklin, Freestone, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Houston, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Shelby, Smith, Trinity, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood. The Health and Human Services Commission, as the agency responsible for regulating hospitals in Texas, is providing this notice concerning the requirement to postpone elective surgeries to all licensed hospitals located in Trauma Service Area G.