



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: DOH Communications
(850) 245-4111

**STATEMENT FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
REGARDING APPROVED TRAUMA CENTER APPLICATIONS**

The Florida Department of Health today approved applications for Blake Medical Center in Manatee County and Regional Medical Center at Bayonet Point in Pasco County to be verified trauma centers. This verification approval marks the last step in a lengthy process that started in September 2009, when both filed letters of intent to become trauma centers in their respective communities. Provisional status to operate as trauma centers was granted on Nov. 19, 2011.

The Department rejects any suggestion that the rule challenge filed on May 23, 2011, altered the Department's obligation under the law to process existing applications. Although the initial review by an administrative law judge found the rule invalid in September 2011, the Department appealed. During the period of appeal, the Department was required to use the existing rule in effect under Florida law. Shortly after the appellate court declared the rule invalid on Nov. 30, 2012, the Department notified all hospitals that had expressed interest in being a trauma center, that without a rule, the Department could not approve applications and remain consistent with Florida law.

Today, in Tampa, the Department held the third in series of six rule development workshops to gather stakeholder and community input for a new apportionment rule. This weekend the Department will host an American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma systems consultation team for a four day site visit in Tallahassee. The Department remains committed to developing a trauma system that is inclusive, sustainable and focused on safe, effective and efficient care for injured patients in Florida.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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