



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

August 9, 2021

Texas Hospital Association  
11008 Lavaca Street, #700  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Texas Hospital Association:

As new COVID-19 variants have expanded into Texas, we have seen more Trauma Service Areas approach a seven-day period where the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent. I am writing to ask for your cooperation to avoid a shortage of hospital capacity.

As you know, I issued executive orders in 2020 to reserve sufficient hospital capacity for COVID-19 patients by postponing certain surgeries and procedures. I have since signed into law Senate Bill 968, in which the Legislature empowered the Texas Medical Board (TMB) to impose temporary limitations on certain elective medical procedures during a disaster. Although these tools remain available to the State of Texas, we should always aim to achieve the least restrictive means of combatting this evolving threat to public health.

To that end, I am asking Texas hospitals to take steps to ensure the availability of adequate hospital capacity to care for COVID-19 patients. Among other strategies, hospitals could voluntarily postpone medical procedures for which delay will not result in loss of life or a deterioration in the patient's condition. Hospitals could also refer some COVID-19 patients to infusion sites, thereby freeing up hospital beds for more serious cases. By taking these voluntary measures, it is my hope that hospitals can avoid the need for an order from TMB under Senate Bill 968.

Thank you for all you do to keep Texans healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott  
Governor